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BY THE

REV. S. BARING-GOULD, M.A.,

Author of "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," "The Origin and Development of Religious Belief," "In Exitu Israel," etc.

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XXV.

MELCHIZEDEK.

We have seen that, according to Jewish traditions, Melchizedek is Shem, the son of Noah, whom God consecrated to be a priest for ever, and who set up a kingdom on Salem.[1]

It is also said that, before he died, Lamech ordered his son, Noah, to transport the body of Adam to the centre of the earth. Now the centre or navel of the earth is Salem, afterwards called Jerusalem.

Lamech also bade Noah confide to one of his children the custody of the body of Adam, obliging him to remain all his life in the service of God, and in the practice of celibacy, never to shed blood, and to offer to God only the sacrifice of bread and wine.

Noah chose, according to some, Shem; according to others, Melchizedek, the son of Shem. He did not suffer him to wear other garments than the skins of beasts; nor to shave his head nor cut his nails, nor to build a house.

[1] This the Targumim, or paraphrases of the Sacred Text, distinctly say, "Melchizedek, who was Shem, son of Noah, king of Jerusalem." (Etheridge, i. p. 199.)

A Christian tradition is that Adam was buried on Golgotha, and that when Christ died, His blood flowed down upon the head of Adam, and cleansed him of his sin.

Dom Calmet, in one of his dissertations, gives various curious opinions which have been entertained on the subject of Melchizedek: some affirmed that he was identical with the patriarch Enoch, who came from the Terrestrial Paradise to confer with Abraham; and others, that the Magi who adored the infant Christ were Enoch, Melchizedek, and Elias.

And some have supposed that Melchizedek was created before Adam, and was of celestial race. Others again have supposed that he was our Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to Abraham.

S. Athanasius gives a curious tradition of Melchizedek.

A queen, named Salem, had a grandson named Melchi. He was an idolater. Where he reigned is unknown; but it is supposed that it was where now stands the city Jerusalem. Melchi married a princess named Salem, like his grandmother. By her he had two sons, of whom the younger was called Melchizedek.

One day that Melchi was about to sacrifice to idols, he said to his son Melchizedek, "Bring me here seven calves to sacrifice to the gods."

Whilst going to execute his father's order, Melchizedek raised his eyes to heaven and said, "He who made heaven and earth, the sea and the stars, is the only God to whom sacrifice should be offered."

Then he returned to his father, who asked him, "Where are the calves?"

"My father," he replied, "hearken to me, and be not angry. Instead of offering thy victims to those gods which are no gods, offer them to Him who is above the heavens, and who rules all things."

King Melchi replied, "Go and do what I have commanded thee, as thou valuest thy life."

After that he turned to his wife Salem, and he told her that he purposed sacrificing one of his sons. The queen wept bitterly, because she knew that the king designed the immolation of Melchizedek, and she said, "Alas! I have suffered and laboured in vain."

"Do not weep," said Melchi, somewhat touched. "We will draw the lot: if it is mine, I will choose which of the sons is to die; if it be thine, thou shalt keep the one dearest to thee."

Now the lot fell to the queen, so she chose Melchizedek, whom she loved; and the king adorned his elder son for sacrifice.

There were in the temple troops of oxen and flocks of sheep, and five hundred and three children, destined by their parents to be sacrificed. The queen was at home weeping, and she said to Melchizedek, "Dost thou not weep for thy brother, whom we have brought up with so much care, and who is led to the slaughter?"

Melchizedek wept, and he said to his mother, "I will go and invoke the Lord, the only true God Most High."

He ascended Tabor, and kneeling down, he prayed, saying, "My God, Lord of all, Creator of heaven and earth, I adore Thee as the only true God; hearken now unto my prayer. May the earth open her mouth and swallow up all those who assist at the sacrifice of my brother!"

God heard the cry of Melchizedek, and the earth parted asunder, and swallowed up the temple and all who were therein; and the city of Salem also, and not a stone was left standing where it had been.

When Melchizedek came down from Tabor, and saw what God had done, he was filled with dismay, and retired into a forest, where he spent seven years, feeding on herbs and drinking the dew.

At the end of that time, a voice from heaven called Abraham, and said, "Take thine ass, lade it with rich garments, go to Tabor and cry thrice, O man of God! Then a man of a

savage appearance will come forth to thee out of the forest. And after thou hast cut his hair and pared his nails, clothe him with the garments thou hast taken with thee, and ask him to bless thee."

Abraham did as he was bidden. He went to Tabor and called thrice, "O man of God!" and there came out to him Melchizedek. Then a voice was heard from heaven, which said, "As there remains no one on earth of the family of Melchizedek, it shall be said of him that he is without father and without mother, without beginning of days or end of life."

Therefore it is said of him, as of Enoch and Elias, that having been created a priest for ever, he is not dead.

Afterwards he is said to have founded Jerusalem.[1]

Suidas the Grammarian gives the following account of this mysterious personage.

"Melchizedek, priest of God, king of Canaan, built a city on a mountain called Sion, and named it Salem; which is the same as Εἰρηνόπολις, the City of Peace. In which, when he had reigned a hundred and thirteen years, he died, righteous and single. For this reason he is said to have been without generation, because he was not of the seed of Abraham, but of the race of Canaan, and of abhorred seed. Therefore he was without honourable generation. Nor did it beseem him, the essence of all righteousness, to unite with the race of all unrighteousness. Therefore he is said to have been without father or mother. But that he was a Canaanite, both as to country, of which he was lord; and as to nation, of which he was king; and as to neighbourhood, joining that of the iniquitous Sodomites,—that is evident enough. Nevertheless Salem, of which he was king, is that celebrated Jerusalem, which, however, did not bear then the complete name of Hierusalem, but the adjective ἱεροῦ was added to Σαλήμ afterwards, and compounded into Hierusalem. And because no genealogy is given

[1] Fabricius, Codex Pseud. V. T. t. i. p. 311. The Book of the Combat of Adam says Melchizedek was the son of Canaan.

to him, he is said to be without father and mother. Therefore, when you hear him spoken of as God, by the sect of the Melchizedekites, remember the saying of the Apostle, that he was of another race, to wit, that of Canaan."[1]

Another apocryphal account of Melchizedek is in the "Chronicon Paschale:"—

"A certain ancient relates and affirms, concerning Melchizedek, this. He was a man of the tribe of Ham, who, being found a holy seed in his tribe, pleased God; and God called him into the land beyond Jordan, even as He called Abraham out of the land of the Chaldeans. And as this man was holy and just, he was made a priest of the Most High God, to offer bread and wine, and holy prayers to the Most High God. He prayed for his tribe, saying, Lord, thou hast brought me from my own people, and hast had mercy on me; have mercy on them also. But God answered him, and said, I will save them when I call my Son out of Egypt. This promise God gave to Melchizedek. The same ancient relates also that at this time it happened that Lot was carried away captive from Sodom by those who were of the tribe Gothologomos, whom Abraham pursued and destroyed, and he liberated all the captives; and Lot also, the son of his brother Aram, he delivered from their hands. Therefore Abraham said within himself, Lord, if in my days Thou sendest Thy angel upon the earth, grant me to see that day! The Lord said, It cannot be, but I will show thee a figure of that day; go down and cross the river Jordan and thou shalt behold it.

"Therefore Abraham crossed Jordan with his men, and Melchizedek came forth to meet him, called by the Holy Ghost, having in his hands the bread of Eucharists and the wine of thanksgiving. Abraham did not see Melchizedek till he had passed over Jordan, which is the symbol of Baptism.

"Abraham then, seeing Melchizedek coming to meet him having the bread of Eucharists and the cup of thanksgiving,

[1] Suidas, Lexic. s. v. Μελχισεδέκ.

fell on his face upon the earth, and adored, since he saw the day of the Lord, and was glad.

"Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, blessed Abraham and said, *Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands.* And Abraham gave him tithes of all."[1]

Michael Glycas says: "Melchizedek, though he is said in the sacred Scriptures to have been without father and mother, yet sprung from Sidos, son of Ægyptos, who built Sidon. When he had built a city on Mount Sion, named Salem, he reigned there thirteen years, and died a just man and a virgin."[2] And Cedrenus: "Melchizedek was the son of King Sidos, son of Ægyptos, but he was said to be without father and mother and of uncertain generation, because he was not of Jewish extraction, and because his parents were bad and not reckoned among the righteous."[3]

Joseph Ben-Gorion writes: "O Jerusalem! once the city of the great King, by what name shall I designate thee? Anciently thou wast called Jebus, after thy founder; then thou didst acquire the name of Zedek, and from thence did thy king Jehoram take his title Melchi-zedek (or Melech-zedek, Lord of Zedek), for he was a just king, and he reigned in thee justly. And thou didst obtain the name of Justice, and in thee justice dwelt, and the star that did illumine thee; thou wast called Zedek, and in the same king's reign, to thee was given the title Salem, as it is written in the Law: and Melchizedek was king of Salem, so called because thus the measure of the iniquity of the people was accomplished. But Abraham, our father, of pious memory, chose thee, to labour in thee and to acquire in thee a possession, and in thee to lay a

[1] Πασχάλιον, seu Chronicon Paschale a mundo condito ad Heraclii imp. ann. vicesimum. Ed. C. du Fresne du Cange; Paris, 1688, p. 49.

[2] Michael Glycas, Βίβλος χρονική, ed. Labbe; Paris, 1660, p. 135.

[3] Georgius Cedrenus, Σύνοψις ἱστοριῶν, ed. Goar; Paris, 1647, t. i. p. 27.

root of good works, and because the majesty of God dwelt in thee, when Abraham, our father, flourished."[1]

S. Epiphanius, however, says: "Although no names of the parents of Melchizedek are given, yet some assert that his father was called Heraclas, and his mother Astaroth, or Asteria."[2] The "Catena Arabica" on Genesis says: "Melchizedek was the son of Heraclis, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber; and the name of his mother was Salathiel, the daughter of Gomer, the son of Japheth, the son of Noah."

Melchizedek is said to have composed the cx. Psalm, *Dixit Dominus*.[3]

The tomb of Melchizedek is, or was, shown at Jerusalem, says Gemelli Carrere, the traveller in Palestine.

[1] Josephus Ben-Gorion, lib. vi. c. 35, apud Fabricium, i. p. 326.
[2] S. Epiphanius Hæresi, lv. c. 2.
[3] Talmud, Tract. Bava Bathra.

XXVI.

OF ISHMAEL AND THE WELL ZEMZEM.

THE Arabs call Hagar, Hagiar Anaï, the mother in chief, because of Ishmael her son. They do not suppose that she was the bond-servant of Sarah, but that she was the legitimate wife of the patriarch; and she bore him Ishmael, who, as his eldest son, had the birthright, and obtained, as his double portion of Abraham's inheritance, the land of Arabia, whereas to Isaac was given the inferior land of Canaan.

They say that Hagar died at Mecca, and that she was buried in the exterior enclosure of the Kaaba, or square temple, built, say they, by Abraham.

Near the tomb is the well of Zemzem, which is the fountain which God revealed to her when she had been driven out of the house of Sarah, and had fled into Arabia.

As has been already mentioned, the Mussulmans say that it was Ishmael and not Isaac whom Abraham prepared to sacrifice. The story need not be related again, as all the particulars in the Jewish legends are absorbed into the Mussulman account.

One particular alone needs mention. Gabriel gave the ram to Abraham in the place where Mussulman pilgrims now cast stones; namely, on the mountain of Mina. But the ram escaped out of the hands of Abraham, and the patriarch threw seven stones after it. Then Ishmael went forward, and the ram halted. Ishmael went up to the ram and brought it

to Abraham, and he took it, and slew it. Some say that this was the same ram that Abel had offered in sacrifice, and which had been preserved in Paradise.[1]

Then God said to Abraham, "Go to Mecca along with Ishmael, and build me the temple there."

At Mecca had been the "Visited-house," to which Adam went in pilgrimage, and round which he walked in procession every year. When the Flood came, this house had been caught up into heaven.

When Abraham went in obedience to the command of God to visit Ishmael, and to call him to build the temple, he found him on a mountain engaged in making arrows. He said to him, "O my son, God has ordered me to build a house along with thee."

Ishmael replied, "I am ready to obey, O my father."

Then they prepared to build. But Abraham knew nothing of architecture.

God sent a cloud of the size of the Kaaba, to show them, by its shadow on the ground, what were to be the dimensions of the house, and to give them shade in which to build.

But some say that the Serpent arrived and instructed Abraham in the proportions of the house. After that, Abraham and Ishmael began to dig the trenches which were to receive the foundations; and they gave them the depth of a man's stature. Then they raised them to the level of the soil; after that, they cut stones out of the neighbouring rocks for the walls of the edifice. Abraham built, and Ishmael handed the stones. Now, when the wall got above his reach, Abraham placed a stone on the ground, and stood upon that to build, and he left thereon the impression of his foot. The stone remains to this day, and is called Makam Ibrahim.

And when the temple was built, God sent Gabriel to instruct Abraham in all the rites of pilgrimage, and how to visit Mina and Mount Arafat, and how to go processionally round the

[1] Tabari, i. c. liii.

Kaaba, and to cast the stones, and to wear the pilgrim's dress, and to make sacrifice, and to shave the head, to visit the holy places, and all that concerns the pilgrimage.

That same year Abraham made the pilgrimage, and he confided the care of the temple to Ishmael, his son, and he said to him, "This land belongs to thee and to thy children till the Judgment Day."

Then Abraham, turning him about, went at God's command to the top of a high mountain, and cried, "O men, God has built you a house, and He calls you to visit it."

And all men and women, and the children yet unborn, answered from every quarter of the world, "We will visit it."

Then Abraham returned into Syria.[1]

Now the well of Zemzem was formed when Hagar and Ishmael were in the desert. The angel Gabriel trod in the ground and the water bubbled up. At first it was sweet as honey, and as nourishing as milk. This well is one of the wonders of Mecca. We shall relate more of it presently.

And the stone that was white and shining, but now is black, that stone was an angel who wept over the sins of men till he has grown dark; that also is one of the wonders of Mecca.

Whilst Ishmael was engaged one day in building the Kaaba, there came to him Alexander the Two-horned, and asked him what he was doing.

Then Abraham answered, "We build a temple to the only God in whom we believe." And Alexander knew that he was a prophet of God; and he went on foot seven times round the temple.

About this Alexander, authorities differ. Some say that he was a Greek, and that he was lord of the whole earth as Nimrod was before him, and as Solomon was after him.

Alexander was lord of light and darkness; when he went forth with his hosts, he had light before him, and behind him

[1] Tabari; Weil, Abulfeda, pp. 25–27, &c.

was darkness: thus he could overtake his enemies, but could not be overtaken by them. He had also two banners, one white and the other black, and when he unfurled the white one, it was instantly broad day; and when he unfurled the black one, it was instantly midnight. Thus he could have day in the darkest night, and night in the brightest day.

He was also unconquerable; for he could, at will, make his army invisible, and fall upon his enemies and destroy them, without their being able to see who were opposed to them. He went through the whole world in quest of the Fountain of Immortality, of which, as he read in his sacred books, a descendant of Shem was pre-ordained to drink, and become immortal.

But his vizir Al Hidhr[1] lighted on the fountain before him and drank, not knowing what were the virtues of this spring; and when Alexander came afterwards, the water had sunk away, for by God's command only one man was destined to drink thereof.

Alexander was called the Two-horned, according to some, because he went through the world from one end to the other; according to others, because he wore two long locks of hair which stood up like horns; according to others, because he had two gold horns on his crown which symbolized the kingdoms of Grecia and Persia over which he reigned. But according to others, he once dreamed that he had got so near to the sun, that he caught it by its two ends, and therefore he was given his name.

Learned men are also equally disagreed as to the time in which he lived, and as to the place of his birth and residence.

Most think that there were two Alexanders. One was descended from Shem, and went with El Khoudr to the end of the world after the Fountain of Immortality, and who was ordered by God to build an indestructible wall against the incursions of the children of Gog and Magog. The other

[1] Or El Khoudr; he is identified in Arab legend with S. George and Elias.

Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedon, and was descended from Japheth, and was the pupil of Aristotle at Athens.[1]

And now let us return to the fountain or well of Zemzem, and relate what befel that.

Nabajoth, the eldest son of Ishmael, succeeded his father in the custody of the Kaaba, of the tombs of Adam and Eve, of the stone, and the well. But having left only very young children to succeed him, Madad-ben-Amron, their maternal grandfather, took charge of their education, and at the same time became the protector of the Kaaba and of the well of Zemzem.

The children of Nabajoth, when they grew old, would not contest with their foster-father the possession of the Holy places, therefore it remained to him and his sons till the time when the Giorhamides took them by violence.

Then the posterity of Ishmael having attacked them, defeated them, and recovered the city and temple of Mecca. But the stone, and the two gazelles of gold which a king of Arabia had given to the Kaaba, had been lost, for they had been thrown into the well of Zemzem, which had been filled up.

The well remained choked and unregarded till the times of Abd-el-Motalleb, grandfather of Mohammed, who one day heard a voice bid him dig the well of Zemzem.

Abd-el-Motalleb asked the voice what Zemzem was.

Then the voice replied: "It is the well that sprang up to nourish Ishmael in the desert, whereof he and his children drank."

Abd-el-Motalleb, not knowing whereabouts to dig, asked further, and the voice answered, "The well of Zemzem is near two idols of the Koraïschites named Assaf and Naïlah; dig on the spot where you shall see a magpie pecking in the ground and turning up a nest of ants."

Abd-el-Motalleb set about obeying the voice, in spite of the opposition of the Koraïschites, who objected to the overthrow

[1] Weil, pp. 94-6.

of their idols. However, he dug, along with his ten sons, and he vowed that if God would show him the water, he would sacrifice one of his sons. And when he came to water, he found the gazelles of gold and the Black Stone.

Then he summoned his children before him and told them his vow. And he drew lots which of them should die, and the lot fell on Abd-Allah, the father of the prophet.

Then said Abd-el-Motalleb, "I am in a great strait; how shall I perform my vow?" For he loved Abd-Allah best of his ten sons. Now the mother of Abd-Allah belonged to the family of Benu-Zora, which is one of the chief in Mecca.

The Benu-Zora family assembled and said, "We will not suffer you to slay your son." But he said, "I must perform my vow." Then he consulted two Jewish astrologers, who said, "Go, and put on one side your child, and on the other your camel, and draw the lot; and if the lot fall on Abd-Allah, add a second camel to the first, and draw the lot again, and continue adding camels till the lot falls on them: then you will know how many camels will be accepted by God as an equivalent for your son."

He did so, and he put one camel, then two, then three, up to fifty. The lot fell on Abd-Allah up to the ninety-ninth camel; but when Abd-el-Motalleb had added the hundredth, then the lot fell on those animals, and he knew that they were accepted in place of his son, and he sacrificed them to the Lord; and this custom has continued among the Arabs, to redeem a man who is to be sacrificed by one hundred camels.[1]

Now when the Koraïschites saw what Abd-el-Motalleb had drawn from the well, they demanded a share of the treasure he had found. But he refused it, saying that all belonged to the temple that Abraham and Ishmael had built.

To decide this quarrel, they agreed to consult a dervish who dwelt on the confines of Syria, and passed for a prophet. It fell out that, on the way, Abd-el-Motalleb, exhausted with thirst,

[1] Tabari, i. p. 181.

was obliged to ask water of the Koraïschites, but they, fearing that they would not have enough for themselves, were obliged to refuse.

Then, from the ground pressed by the foot of the camel of Abd-el-Mofalleb, a fountain gushed forth, which quenched the thirst of himself and of those who had refused to give him water, and they, seeing the miracle, recognized him as a prophet sent from God, and they relinquished their pretensions to the well of Zemzem.

And when the well was cleared out, Abd-el-Motalleb gave to the temple of the Kaaba the two gazelles of gold, and all the silver, and the arms and precious things he found in the well. For long, Mecca was supplied with water from the well of Zemzem alone, till the concourse of pilgrims became so great, that the Khalifs were obliged to construct an aqueduct to bring abundance of water into the city.

Mohammed, to honour the town of Mecca, where he was born, gave great praise to the water of the well. It is believed among the Arabs that a draught of that water gives health, and that to drink much thereof washes away sin. It is related of a certain Mussulman teacher, who knew a great many traditions, that, having been interrogated on his memory, he replied, "Since I have drunk long draughts of the water of Zemzem, I have forgotten nothing that I learnt."

To conclude what we have to say of Ishmael.

He had a daughter named Basemath, whom he married to Esau, and many sons; two, Nabajoth and Kedar, were his sons who dwelt in Mecca. He was a hundred and thirty years old when he died, and he was buried at Mecca, after having appointed Isaac his executor.

XXVII.

ESAU AND JACOB.

THERE are few Oriental traditions, whether Rabbinic or Mussulman, concerning Isaac's life after he was married and his father died. Those touching his birth, early life, and marriage, have been given in the article on Abraham.

We proceed, therefore, to his history as connected with Esau and Jacob.

Isaac, says Tabari, lived a hundred years after Ishmael. God granted him the gift of prophecy, and sent him to the inhabitants of Syria, in the country of Canaan, for he could not change his place of abode on account of his blindness; for Abimelech had wished him to be dim of sight, because Abraham had deceived him by saying, "Sarah is my sister;" and, say the Rabbis, Isaac's eyes were made dim by the tears of the angels falling into them as he was stretched upon the altar by his father; or because he had then looked upon the Throne of God, and had been dazzled thereby.

But others say he went blind through grief and tears at his son Esau having taken four Canaanitish women to wife.

Isaac had two sons, twins, by Rebekah his wife—Esau and Jacob.

The Cabbalists say that the soul of Esau, whom the Arabs call Aïs, passed into the body of Jesus Christ by metempsychosis, and that Jesus and Esau are one; and this they attempt

to prove by showing that the Hebrew letters composing the name Jesus are the same as those of which Esau is compounded.[1]

The following curious story is told of the brothers by the Rabbi Eliezer:—"It is said that when Jacob and Esau were in their mother's womb, Jacob said to Esau, 'My brother, there are two worlds before us, this world and the world to come. In this world, men eat, and drink, and traffic, and marry, and bring up sons and daughters; but all this does not take place in the world to come. If you like, take this world and I will take the other.' And Esau denied that there was a resurrection of the dead, and said, '*Behold I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?*' And he gave over to Jacob in that hour his right to the other world."[2] Therefore Esau and his descendants have no part or lot in Paradise, and none are admitted there.[3]

It is also said that the religious predilections of the children were developed before they were born. On the words of Genesis, "*The children struggled together within her*,"[4] a Rabbinic commentator says that when Rebekah passed before a synagogue, then Jacob made great efforts to escape into the world, that he might attend the synagogue, and this is the meaning of the words of the prophet Jeremiah, when God says of Jacob, "*Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee*;"[5] but whenever she went before an idol temple, Esau became excited, and desired to come forth.[6]

When Esau was born, he had on his heel the likeness of a serpent, and his name indicates that he was closely connected with Satan (Sammael); for, says the Rabbi Isaiah, if you write the name Sammael in Hebrew characters, you will find it to be identical with that of Esau; for the four letters of Esau turned one way make Sammael, and turned another way make

[1] Maschmia Jeschua, fol. 19, col. 4.
[2] Nezach Israel, fol. 25, col. 3.
[3] Eisenmenger, ii. pp. 260, 304.
[4] Gen. xxv. 22.
[5] Jer. i. 5.
[6] Bereschith Rabba, fol. 56, col. 2.

Edom.[1] Esau had also a serpent in his inside coiled in his bowels.[2]

Esau was called Edom, or Red, because, say some, he sucked his mother's blood before he was born; or, say others, because he was to shed blood; or again, because he was born under the ruddy planet Mars; or again, because he liked to eat his meat underdone and red;[3] but the Targumim say that Esau had red hair over his body like a garment; therefore he was called Esau.[4]

The lads grew; and Esau was a man of idleness to catch birds and beasts, a man going forth into the field to kill, as Nimrod had killed, and Anak, his son. But Jacob was a man peaceful in his works, a minister of the school of Eber, seeking instruction before the Lord. And Isaac loved Esau, for words of deceit were in his mouth; but Rebekah loved Jacob.[5]

On the day that Abraham died, Jacob dressed pottage of lentiles, and was going to comfort his father. And Esau came from the wilderness, exhausted; for in that day he had committed five transgressions—he had worshipped with strange worship, he had shed innocent blood, he had pursued a betrothed damsel, he had denied the life of the world to come, and he had despised his birthright.[6]

And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me now taste that red pottage, for I am faint." Therefore he called his name Edom.

And Jacob said, "Sell to me to-day what thou wouldst hereafter appropriate—thy birthright."

And Esau said, "Behold, I am going to die, and in another world I shall have no life; and what then to me is the birthright, or the portion in the world of which thou speakest?"

And Jacob said, "Swear to me to-day that so it shall be."

[1] Eisenmenger, i. 646. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., pp. 650–1.
[4] Targums, ed. Etheridge, i. p. 240. [5] Ibid., p. 241.
[6] Ibid., also R. Bechai's Comment. on the Five Books of Moses, fol. 35, col. i.

And he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave to Esau bread, and pottage of lentiles. And he ate and drank, and arose and went. And Esau scorned the birthright, and the portion of the world that cometh, and denied the resurrection of the dead.[1]

But according to certain Rabbinic authorities Esau sold his birthright not only for the mess of lentiles, but also for a sword that Jacob had—to wit, the sword of Methuselah, wherewith he had slain a thousand devils.[2]

Esau had the garment which God had made for Adam,[3] on which were embroidered the forms of all the wild beasts and birds that were on the face of the earth, in their proper colours. This garment had been stolen by Ham from Noah in the ark, and had been given by him to Cush, who gave it to Nimrod. Esau killed Nimrod, and took from him his painted dress, and thenceforth all the success in hunting which had attended Nimrod devolved upon Esau.[4]

The story of the blessing of Jacob and Esau has not become surrounded with many fables. The following are the most remarkable. Esau on that occasion went forth in such haste to catch the venison, that he forgot to take with him Nimrod's garment, and therefore was not successful in hunting, as on former occasions, and Jacob took advantage of this forgetfulness to assume the embroidered coat.[5]

And when the meat was ready, and Isaac began to eat thereof, he was thirsty, and there was no wine for him in the house. So an angel was sent to him out of Paradise, and brought him the juice of the grape that grows there on the vine that was created before the foundations of the earth were laid.[6]

[1] Targum of Palestine and Jerusalem; Etheridge, i. 241, 242. The book Yaschar says the deed of transfer was written by Jacob on a leaf, and that he and Esau sealed it, p. 1151.

[2] Eisenmenger, i. p. 651.

[3] Gen. iii. 21.

[4] Yaschar, p. 1150, where is the story of the assassination of Nimrod by Esau.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Eisenmenger, ii. p. 879.

Isaac was so angry at having been deceived by Jacob, that he was about to doom him to Gehinnom, after he said, "*Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him?*" But he paused to prepare his curse.

Then God suddenly opened hell to him beneath his feet, and he looked into it, and saw the abyss of fire and darkness, and his horror rendered him speechless; but when he recovered his voice, he resolved that no child of his should descend there; therefore he added, "*Yea, and he shall be blessed.*"[1]

The Mussulmans relate the history of Esau and Jacob much as it stands in the Book of Genesis. They add that the benediction of Esau was fulfilled in his having a son named Roum, from whom sprang the Greek and Roman empires.

This is also a Rabbinical tradition, for the Talmudists say that Esau had a son named Eliphaz, who had a son, Zepho, from whom Vespasian and his son Titus were descended, and thus they attribute the destruction of Jerusalem to the struggle of Esau to break the yoke of Jacob from off his neck.

Esau is said by the Rabbis to have had four wives, in imitation of Satan, or Sammael, as has been already related.

Abulfaraj says that Esau made war with Jacob, and was killed by him with an arrow.

Jacob feared Esau, for Esau said in his heart, "I will not do as Cain did, who slew his brother Abel in the lifetime of his father, after which his father begat Seth; but I will wait till the days of mourning for my father are accomplished, and then I will kill Jacob, and so I shall be the sole heir."[2]

Therefore Jacob went out only at night; during the day he hid himself away. Thus, several years passed, and his life became intolerable to him. So his mother said, "Thy uncle Laban, the son of Bethuel, has great possessions, and is very old. Go, and ask him to give thee his daughter; and if he consents, then tarry with him till thy brother's anger turn

[1] Eisenmenger, ii. p. 262. [2] Targums, i. p. 250.

away." Jacob listened to the advice of his mother, and he fled away without letting Esau know.

Five miracles were wrought for the patriarch Jacob, at the time when he went forth from Beer-sheba. First, the hours of the day were shortened, and the sun went down before its time, because the Word desired to speak with him; secondly, the four stones, which Jacob had set for his pillow, he found in the morning had coagulated into one stone; thirdly, the stone which, when all the flocks were assembled, the shepherds rolled from the mouth of the well, he rolled away with one of his arms; fourthly, the well overflowed, and the water continued to flow all the days he was in Haran. The fifth sign—the country was shortened before him, so that in one day he went forth and came to Haran.[1]

And he prayed in the place where he rested, and took four stones of that place, and set them for a pillow, and went asleep. Of these stones this is the history. They were twelve in number, and Adam had set them up as an altar. On them Abel had offered his sacrifice. The Deluge had thrown them down, but Noah reared them once more. They had been again overthrown, but Abraham set them in their places, and of them built the altar on which to sacrifice Isaac. These twelve stones Jacob now found, and he placed them under his head as a pillow. But a great wonder was wrought, and in the morning the twelve stones had melted together into one stone.[2]

Finally, this stone, so ancient and with such a history, was carried to Scotland, by whom I do not know, where it was placed at Scone, and was used for the consecration of the Scottish kings. Edward I. of England brought it to London, and it was set beneath the chair of the Confessor, as the following lines, inscribed on a tablet, announced :—

> "Si quid habent veri, vel chronica cana, fidesve,
> Clauditur hac cathedra nobilis, ecce, lapis.

[1] Targums, i. p. 252.

[2] Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 35.

Ad caput eximius Jacob quondam patriarcha
Quem posuit cernens numina mira poli.
Quem tulit ex Scottis, spolians quasi victor honoris,
Edwardus primus, Mars velut omnipotens.
Scottorum domitor, noster validissimus Hector,
Anglorum decus, et gloria militiæ." [1]

The stone may now be seen in Westminster Abbey.

When Jacob—to return to our narrative—slept with his head on the pillow of stones, he dreamed, and beheld a ladder fixed in the earth, and the summit of it reached to the height of heaven. And, behold! the angels who had accompanied him from the house of his father, ascended to make known to the angels on high, saying, "Come, see Jacob the pious, whose likeness is in the throne of glory, and whom you have been desirous to see!" These were the two angels who had been sent to Sodom to destroy it, and who had been forbidden to rise up to the throne of God again, because, say some, they had revealed the secrets of the Lord of the whole earth, or because, say others, they had threatened in their own name to destroy the cities of the plain.

Then the rest of the angels of God came down, at the call of these twain, to look upon Jacob.

And the Glory of the Lord stood above him, and He said to him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land on which thou art lying I will give to thee and thy sons. And thy sons shall be many as the dust of the earth, and shall become strong in the west and in the east, and in the north and in the south; and all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed through thy righteousness and the righteousness of thy sons."

When Jacob arrived at Haran, he saw a well in a field, and three flocks lying near it—because from that well they watered the flocks—and a great stone was laid upon the mouth of the well.

[1] William Sanderson, Vita Mariæ, reg. Scot., et Jacobi, reg. Anglorum; also Beckmann, Notitiar. dignit. Dissert. 3, c. i. § 7.

And Jacob said to the shepherds, "My brethren, whence are ye?"

They said, "From Haran are we."

And he said, "Know you Laban, son of Nahor?" They answered, "We know him."

And he said, "Hath he peace?"

They said, "Peace; and behold, Rachel, his daughter, cometh with the sheep."

And he said, "Behold, the time of the day is great; it is not time to gather home the cattle; water the sheep."

But they said, "We cannot, until all the shepherds be gathered, and then we can altogether roll away the stone."

While they were speaking with him, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she was a shepherdess at that time, because there had been a plague among the sheep of Laban, and but few of them were left; and he had dismissed his shepherds, and had put the remaining flock before Rachel, his daughter.

Then Jacob went nigh, and rolled the stone which all the shepherds together could scarce lift, with one of his hands, and the well uprose, and the waters flowed, and he watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother; and it uprose for twenty years.

And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept.

And Jacob told Rachel that he was come to be with her father, to take one of his daughters. Then Rachel answered him: "Thou canst not dwell with him, for he is a man of cunning."

But Jacob said, "I am more cunning than he."

And when she knew that he was the son of Rebekah, she ran, and made it known to her father. And when Laban heard the account of the strength of Jacob, his sister's son, and how he had taken the birthright and the order of blessing from the hand of his brother, and how the Lord had revealed Himself

to him in the way, and how the stone had been removed, and how the well had upflowed and risen to the brink,—he ran and kissed him, and led him into his house.

Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger, Rachel. And the eyes of Leah were moist and running, from weeping and praying before the Lord, that He would not destine her for Esau the wicked.

Jacob served Laban seven years, and was given Leah to wife; and he served seven years more, and he was given Rachel to wife; and he served six years for cattle that Laban gave him; and then, seeing that Laban's face was set against him, he fled away secretly from Laban's house, and Rachel stole the image that Laban worshipped. And this image was the head of a man, a first-born, that Laban had slain, and he had salted it with salt and balsams, and had written incantations on a plate of gold for it, and this head spake to him and told him oracles, and Laban bowed himself down before it.[1]

Jacob drew near to the land of Esau, and he feared that his enmity was not abated; therefore he sent a message before him to his brother, and he tarried all night at Mahanaim. And he sent a present before him to Esau to abate his anger.

The Book of Jasher gives some curious details on the meeting of the brothers.

Jacob, trusting to the support of the Most High, besought Him to stand by him, and deliver him from the wrath of his brother. And God sent four angels to protect him; these angels went before him. The first who met Esau presented himself at the head of a thousand horsemen, armed at all points, who fell upon the troop that accompanied Esau, and dispersed it. As this body of men swept along, they shouted, "We are the servants of Jacob; who can resist us?"

A second body followed, under the second angel; then a third phalanx, under the third angel.

Esau, trembling, exclaimed, "I am the brother of Jacob.

[1] The whole of the above is from the Targumim.

It is twenty years since I saw him, and you maltreat me as I am on my way to meet him!"

One of the angels answered, "If Jacob, the servant of God, had not been thy brother, we would have destroyed thee and all thy men."

The fourth body passing, under the command of the fourth angel, completed the humiliation of Esau.

However, Jacob, who knew not what assistance had been rendered him by Heaven, prepared for Esau, to appease him, rich presents. He sent him four hundred and forty sheep, thirty asses, thirty camels, fifty oxen, in ten troops, each conducted by a faithful servant charged to deliver his troop as a gift from Jacob to his brother Esau.

This consoled and pleased Esau, who, as soon as he saw Jacob again, was, by the grace of God, placed in a better mind, and the brethren met, and parted with fraternal love.[1]

Now let us take another version of the story of this meeting.

It came to pass that Jacob spent one night alone beyond Jabbok, and an angel contended with him, having taken on him the body and likeness of a man. This angel was Michael, and the subject of their contention was this:—The angel said to Jacob, "Hast thou not promised to give the tenth of all that is thine to the Lord?" And Jacob said, "I have promised."

Then the angel said, "Behold thou hast ten sons and one daughter; nevertheless thou hast not tithed them."

Immediately Jacob set apart the four first-born of the four mothers, and there remained eight. And he began to number from Simeon, and Levi came up for the tenth.

Then Michael answered and said, "Lord of the world, this is Thy lot." So Levi became the consecrated one to the Lord.

On account of this ready compliance with his oath, Michael was unable to hurt him, but he remained striving with Jacob, till the first ray of sunlight rose above the eastern hills.

[1] Jalkut Cadasch, fol. 81, col. 1; Yaschar, p. 1161 et seq.

And he said, "Let me go, for the column of the morning ascendeth, and the hour cometh when the angels on high offer praise to the Lord of the world: and I am one of the angels of praise; but from the day that the world was created, my time to praise hath not come till now."

And he said, "I will not let thee go, until thou bless me."

Now Michael had received commandment not to leave Jacob till the patriarch suffered him; and as it began to dawn, the hosts of heaven, who desired to begin their morning hymn, came down to Michael and bade him rise up to the throne of God and lead the chant; but he said, "I cannot, unless Jacob suffer me to depart."[1]

Thus did God prove Jacob, as He had proved Abraham, whether he would give to Him his son, when He asked him of the patriarch.

But, according to certain Rabbinic authorities, it was not Michael who wrestled with Jacob, but it was Sammael the Evil One, or Satan. For Sammael is the angel of Edom, as Michael is the angel of Israel; and Sammael went before Esau, hoping to destroy Jacob in the night. Sammael, says the Jalkut Rubeni, met Jacob, who had the stature of the first man, and strove with him; but he could not do him an injury, for Abraham stood on his right hand, and Isaac on his left. And when Sammael would part from him, Jacob would not suffer it, till the Evil One had given him the blessing which Jacob had purchased from Esau. And from that day Sammael took from Jacob his great strength, and made him to halt upon his thigh.[2]

But when Michael appeared before God—we must now suppose the man who strove with Jacob to have been the angel—God said to him in anger, "Thou hast injured My priest!"

Michael answered, "I am Thy priest."

[1] Eisenmenger, i. p. 486.
[2] Jalkut Rubeni, fol. 61, col. 3.

"Yea," said the Most High, "thou art My priest in heaven, but Jacob is My priest on earth. Why hast thou lamed him?"

Then Michael answered, "I wrestled with him, and let him overcome me, to Thy honour, O Lord; that, seeing he had overcome an angel of God, he might have courage to go boldly to meet Esau."

But this was no excuse for having lamed him. Therefore Michael said to Raphael, "Oh, angel of healing! come to my aid." So Raphael descended to earth, and touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and it was restored as before.

But God said to Michael, "For this that thou hast done, thou shalt be the guardian of Israel as long as the world lasteth." [1]

Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for he said, "I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face, and my soul is saved." And the sun rose upon him before its time, as, when he went out from Beer-sheba, it had set before its time.[2]

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men of war. And he divided the children unto Leah, and to Rachel, and to the two concubines, and placed the concubines and their sons foremost; for he said, "If Esau come to destroy the children, and ill-treat the women, he will do it with them, and meanwhile we can prepare to fight; and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph after them." [3] And he himself went over before them, praying and asking mercy before the Lord; and he bowed upon the earth seven times, until he met with his brother; but it was not to Esau that he bowed, though Esau supposed he did, but to the Lord God Most High.[4]

And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell

[1] Jalkut Cadasch, fol. 91, col. 4.

[2] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 272.

[3] Jacob prepared three things against Esau—War, Gifts, and Prayer—as a token to all men that they must overcome evil by Resistance, by Alms, and by Supplication. (R. Bechai, Comm. on the Five Books of Moses, fol. 42, col. 4.)

[4] Jalkut Rubeni, fol. 62, col. 2.

upon his neck and bit him, but by the mercy of God the neck of Jacob became marble, and Esau broke his teeth upon it; therefore it is said in the Book of Genesis that he *fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept.*[1] But the Targumim apparently do not acknowledge that the neck of Jacob became marble, for the Targum of Palestine explains their weeping thus: "Esau wept on account of the pain of his teeth, which were shaken; but Jacob wept because of the pain of his neck," and the Targum of Jerusalem, "Esau wept for the crushing of his teeth, and Jacob wept for the tenderness of his neck."

"The Lord God prospered Jacob," and he had one hundred and two times ten thousand and seven thousand (*i.e.* a thousand times a thousand, seven thousand and two hundred) sheep, and six hundred thousand dogs; but some Rabbis say the sheep were quite innumerable, but when Jacob counted his sheep-dogs he found that he had twelve hundred thousand of them; others, however, reduce the number one-half. They say, one dog went with each flock, but those who say that there were twelve hundred thousand dogs, count two to each flock.[2]

Jacob, says the Rabbi Samuel, could recite the whole of the Psalter.[3] Of course this must have been in the spirit of prophecy, as the Psalms were not written, with the exception of Psalm civ., which had been composed by Adam.

Adam, after his fall, had been given by God six commandments, but Noah was given a seventh—to this effect, that he was not to eat a limb or portion of any living animal. Abraham was given an eighth, the commandment of circumcision; and Jacob was communicated a ninth, through the mouth of an adder, that he was not to eat the serpent.[4]

If we may trust the Book of Jasher, the affair of Shechem, the son of Hamor, was as follows:—The men of the city were not all circumcised, only some of them, so as to blind the eyes

[1] Bereschith rabba, fol. 71, col. 1 (70th Parascha). [2] Ibid., fol. 67, col. 1.
[3] Jalkut Cadasch, fol. 90, col. 3. [4] Eisenmenger, i. p. 325.

of the sons of Jacob, and throw them off their guard; and Shechem and Hamor had privately concerted to fall upon Jacob and his sons and butcher them; but Simeon and Levi were warned of their intention by a servant of Dinah, and took the initiative.[1] But this is a clumsy attempt to throw the blame off the shoulders of the ancestors of the Jewish nation upon those of their Gentile enemies.

Jacob, say the Rabbis, would have had no daughters at all in his family, but only sons, had he not called himself El-elohe-Israel (Israel is God).[2] Therefore God was angry with him, for making himself equal with God, and in punishment he afflicted him with a giddy daughter.[3]

Esau, say the Mussulmans, had no prophets in his family except Job. All the prophets rose from the family of Jacob; and when Esau saw that the gift of prophecy was not in his family, he went out of the land, for he would not live near his brother.[4]

The father of the Israelites, from the land of Canaan which he inhabited, could smell the clothes of Joseph when he was in Egypt, being a prophet; and thus he knew that his son was alive. He was asked how it was that he divined nothing when his beloved son was cast into the pit by his brothers, and sold to the Ishmaelites. He replied that the prophetic power is sudden, like a lightning flash, piercing sometimes to the height of heaven; it is not permanent in its intensity, but leaves at times those favoured with it in such darkness, that they do not know what is at their feet.[5]

The Arabs say that Jacob, much afflicted with sciatica, was healed by abstaining from the meat he most loved, and that was the flesh of the camel. At Jerusalem, say the Arabs, is preserved the stone on which Jacob laid his head when he slept on his way to Haran.

[1] Tabari, i. p. 206.
[2] Gen. xxxiii. 20.
[3] Jalkut Cadasch, fol. 91, col. 3.
[4] Yaschar, pp. 1167, 1168.
[5] D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, s. v. Ais, i. p. 142.

The custom of saying "God bless you!" when a person sneezes, dates from Jacob. The Rabbis say that, before the time that Jacob lived, men sneezed once, and that was the end of them—the shock slew them; but the patriarch, by his intercession, obtained a relaxation of this law, subject to the condition that, in all nations, a sneeze should be consecrated by a sacred aspiration.

XXVIII.

JOSEPH.

JOSEPH'S story is too attractive not to have interested intensely the Oriental nations in any way connected with him, and therefore to have become a prey to legend and myth.

Joseph, say the Mussulmans, was from his childhood the best loved son of his father Jacob; but the old man not only loved him, but yearned after the sight of him, for he was deprived of the custody of Joseph from an early age. Joseph had been sent to his aunt, the sister of Isaac, and she loved the child so dearly, that she could not endure the thought of parting with him. Therefore she took the family girdle, which she as the eldest retained as an heirloom, the girdle which Abraham had worn when he prepared to sacrifice his son, and she strapped it round Joseph's waist.

Then she drew him before the judge, and accused him of theft, and claimed that he should be made over to her as a slave to expiate his theft. And it was done so. Thus the child Joseph grew up in her house, and it was not till after her death that he returned to his father Jacob.

One morning Joseph related to his father a dream that he had dreamt; he said that he and his brothers had planted twigs in the earth, but all the twigs of his brothers had withered, whereas his own twig had brought forth leaves, and flourished.

Jacob was so immersed in thought over the dream, that he

allowed a poor man who came begging to go away unrelieved, because unnoticed.[1] And this act of forgetfulness brought upon him some trouble, as we shall see.

One morning Joseph related to him another dream; he saw the sun, the moon, and the stars bow down before him. Jacob could no longer doubt the significance of these dreams, which showed him how great Joseph would be, but he cautioned him on no account to let his brothers know about them, lest they should envy him.

He was so beautiful that he was called the Moon of Canaan, and he had on one of his shoulders a luminous point like a star, a token that the spirit of prophecy rested upon him. The brothers of Joseph, however, heard of the dreams, and they were greatly enraged, and they said, "Joseph and Benjamin are more loved of their father than we ten; let us kill Joseph, or drive him out of the country, and when we have done this, we will repent at our leisure, and God will forgive us."[2]

One day the brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. Then Israel said to Joseph, "Do not thy brethren feed in Shechem? I am afraid lest the Hivite come upon them and smite them, and repay on me what Simeon and Levi did to Shechem and Hamor, because of Dinah their sister. I will send thee to them to caution them to go elsewhere."

And he said, "I am ready." So Joseph arose, and went to Shechem; and Gabriel, in the likeness of a man, found him wandering in the field. And he said to him, "Thy brethren have journeyed hence. I heard of them, when I was in the presence of God, behind the veil, and that, from this day, the bondage of Egypt begins."[3]

When Joseph came in sight, the brothers conspired to slay him, but Judah said, "Slay not Joseph, for to slay is a crime; but cast him into a well, on the way that the caravans pass,

[1] This was Sammael, and he complained to God that Jacob had neglected the duty of hospitality, therefore he was suffered to afflict him for a season.
[2] Tabari, i. p. 210.
[3] Targums, i. p. 287.

that he may be found by a caravan, and be drawn out." Joseph was then aged seventeen.

His brethren fell on him and stripped him, and were about to cast him into the well which was by the wayside to Jerusalem, when he said, "O my brothers, wherewith shall I cover my nakedness in this pit?"

They replied, "Bid the sun, the moon, and the stars, which adored thee, bring thee clothes to cover thy nakedness."

Having thus mocked him, they let him down into the well. There was much water in it; and a stone had fallen into it; on this Joseph stood, and was above the surface of the water.[1] Not so, say the Rabbis, it was dry, but it was full of scorpions and adders.[2]

Judah, according to the Mussulman account, had not consented to this, he being absent; and when he had learned what had been done, he took food and let it down into the well, and told Joseph to be of good cheer, his brothers' anger would turn away, and then he would bring him back to them. But the Jews say that Reuben was absent, as he was fasting on a mountain, because he had incurred his father's anger, and was in disgrace, and he hoped, by restoring Joseph to Israel, to recover his father's favour.

The sons of Jacob then slew a lamb and dipped the garment of Joseph in the blood, and brought it to their father, and said, "We left Joseph in charge of our clothes, and a wolf has fallen upon him, and has devoured him."

But Jacob looked at the garment and said, "I see that it is bloody, but I see no rents; the wolf was merciful to my son Joseph, for he ate him and left his garment whole!'[3]

Then Jacob went to commune with God, and the spirit of prophecy came upon him, and he said, "No wolf, no enemy has slain him, but a bad woman is against him."[4]

[1] Tabari, i. p. 211.

[2] Targums, i. p. 288. The account of the sale in Yaschar is very long, and full of details too numerous for insertion here (pp. 1185-8.)

[3] Tabari, i. p. 212.

[4] Targums, i. 289.

Now Joseph was three days and three nights in the pit but it was not dark, for the angel Gabriel hung in it a precious stone to give him light.[1]

The brethren of Joseph, seeing that their father mistrusted them, said to him, "We will go and catch the wolf that slew Joseph."

He said, "Go, and do so."

So they went and chased and caught a monstrous wolf, and they brought him to their father and said, "This is the beast whereof we spoke to thee, that it had slain Joseph."

But God opened the mouth of the wolf, and he said, "Son of Isaac, believe not the words of thy envious sons. I am a wolf out of a foreign land: I one morning lost my young one when I woke up, and I have been straying in all directions to find it; is it likely that I, mourning over the loss of a wild cub, should attack and kill a young prophet?"

Jacob released the wolf out of the hands of his sons, and he dismissed his sons, for he abhorred the sight of their faces; only Benjamin, the brother of Joseph, and the youngest child of Rachel, did he retain near him.[2]

On the third morning, a party of Arabs passed near the well, and were thirsty. Now the chief of these Arabs was Melek-ben-Dohar; the second, who accompanied Melek, was an Indian, a freed man of Melek, and his name was Buschra.

Melek reached the well carrying a bucket and a rope, and let down the bucket into the well. Then Joseph put his hand on it, and, however much Melek and Buschra pulled, they could not raise the bucket. Then Melek looked down into the pit, and exclaimed: "O Buschra, the bucket was heavy because a young man has hold of it."

Now the face of Joseph illumined the well like a lamp: Buschra and Melek tried to raise Joseph, but they could not.

Then Melek asked, "What is thy name, and whence art thou?"

[1] Weil, p. 102.

[2] Yaschar, tr. Drachs, p. 1192.

Joseph answered, "I am a young man of Canaan; my brothers have cast me into this cistern, but I am not guilty."

Melek said to his companions, "If we tell the rest of the caravan that we have drawn this youth out of the well, they will demand a share in the price he will fetch. Now I can sell this youth for a large sum in Egypt. I will therefore tell my comrades that I have bought him from some people who were at the well. Do thou say the same thing, and we will share the money between us."

Next day, being the fourth day, the brethren, finding that their father's face was turned against them, went to the cistern to draw forth Joseph, and when they found him not, they went to the caravan, and they saw Joseph among the Arabs.

Then they asked, "Whose is this lad?"

Melek-ben-Dohar replied, "He is mine."

They answered, "He belongs to us; he ran away from us."

Melek replied, "Well, I will give you money for him."[1]

So he bought him for twenty pieces of silver; thus each of the brothers obtained two drachmæ, and therewith they bought shoes.[2] To this the prophet Amos refers in two places (ii. 6; viii. 6), and in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, which is received as canonical by the Armenian Church, Zebulun relates the same circumstance, that the brethren supplied themselves with sandals from the money which they got by the sale of Joseph.

Joseph went along with the Ishmaelites till they passed his mother's tomb; then his grief overcame him, and he burst forth into bitter tears and cried, "O mother, mother! I am an outcast and a slave, I the child of the wife Jacob loved. When thou wast dying, thou didst show me to my father, and bade him look on me, and be comforted for my loss. O mother, mother! hast thou no thought of thy son? Awake and see the miserable condition of thy child; shake off thy sleep; be my defence against my brethren, and comfort my father.

[1] Tabari, i. pp. 213, 214. [2] Targums, i. 288.

Awake and stand up to judge my quarrel, awake and plead my cause with God! awake and look upon the desolation of the soul of my father who cherished thee, and who for fourteen years served a hard bondage for his beloved Rachel! Console him, I pray thee, and, by the voice that he loves, soothe the grief of his last days."

It was moonlight, and the caravan was resting.

A low voice issued from the tomb. "My son! my son Joseph! my child! I have heard the voice of thy crying. I know all thou hast suffered, my son, and my grief is as deep as the sea. But put thy trust in God, who is the help of thy countenance and thy God! Rise, my child, and have patience. If thou knewest the future, thou wouldst be comforted."[1]

One of the chiefs of the caravan, wearied with the cries of Joseph, came to drive him from the tomb, but suddenly a dark and threatening cloud appeared in the sky over his head, and he desisted in fear.

In the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Benjamin says that a man struck Joseph as he lagged on the way, whereupon a lion fell upon the man and slew him.

The sun was about to set, when the caravan entered Heliopolis, the chief city of Egypt, which was then under the government of Rajjan, an Amalekite. Joseph's face shone brighter than the mid-day sun; and as this new light from the east shone in the city, and cast the shadows towards the declining sun, all the women and damsels ran out upon the terraces or to the windows to see.

Next day he was placed for sale before the palace of the king. All the wealthy ladies of Heliopolis sent their husbands or relations to bid for the beautiful youth, but he was purchased by Potiphar, the king's treasurer,[2] who was childless, and designed making Joseph his adopted son and heir.

[1] Yaschar, pp. 1188-9; Parrascha Wajescheb. This touching incident is common to Rabbinic and Mussulman traditions. It has been gracefully versified by Dr. Le Heris, "Sagen aus der Orient;" Mannheim, 1852.

[2] His name in Arabic is Aziz.

Zuleika,[1] Potiphar's wife, received him with great friendliness, gave him new clothes and a garden-house in which to live, as he would not sit down to eat with the Egyptians. He was occupied in tending the fruit and the flowers in Potiphar's garden; and from her window Zuleika watched him.

Thus Joseph served as gardener to Potiphar for six years.

A graceful Arab legend of this period of Joseph's life deserves not to be omitted.

One day an Ishmaelite passed the gate of Potiphar's garden, leading a camel. As the beast approached Joseph, who was standing at the door, it bowed, refused to follow its master, and turning to Joseph, fell before him, and shed tears over his feet.

Joseph recognized the camel as having once belonged to his father, and he remembered having often given it bread. He questioned the Ishmaelite, who acknowledged he had purchased the beast from Israel.

Now Joseph loved Zuleika as much as she loved him, but he did not venture to hope that he was precious to his mistress.

One day when a great feast of the gods was observed, all the household had gone to the temple, save Zuleika, who pretended to be ill, and Joseph, who worshipped the One true God. Zuleika prepared a table with wine and fruit and sweet cakes, and invited Joseph to eat with her.

He was rejoiced, and his heart beat with passion; and when he took the goblet of wine she offered him, he looked into her eyes, and saw that she loved him. Then, says the Rabbi Ishmael in the Midrash, the form of his father Jacob appeared in the window or doorway, and thus addressed him: "Joseph! hereafter the names of thy brothers engraven on gems shall adorn the breastplate of the High Priest, and shall thine be absent from among them?" Then Joseph dug his ten fingers into the ground, and so conquered himself.[2]

[1] Zuleika is the name in Yaschar; it is that also given her by the Arabs.

[2] Tract. Sota., fol. 36, col. 2. The original account of this final detail is too absurd and monstrous to be narrated more particularly.

The Mussulmans say also that Joseph was brought to his senses by seeing the vision of his father in the door biting his finger reproachfully at him.[1]

When Potiphar returned home, Zuleika brought false accusations against Joseph, but a babe who was in its cradle, in the room,—the child was a relation of Zuleika,—lifted up its voice in protest, and said, "Potiphar, if you want to know the truth, examine the torn portion of the garment. If it is from the front of the dress, then know that Zuleika was struggling to thrust Joseph from approaching her; if from the back, know that she was pursuing him."

Potiphar obeyed the voice of the sucking child, and found that his wife had spoken falsely, and that Joseph was innocent.[2]

Now one of the neighbours had seen all that took place, for she was sick, and had not attended the feast, so the whole affair was soon a matter of gossip throughout the town. Then Zuleika invited all the ladies who had blamed her to a great feast in her house; and towards the close of the banquet, when the fruit and wine were brought in, an orange and a knife were placed before each lady; and at the same moment Joseph was brought into the room. The ladies, in their astonishment, cut their fingers in mistake for the oranges, for their eyes were fixed upon him, and they were amazed at his beauty; and the table was deluged with blood.

"This," said Zuleika, "is the youth on whose account you blame me. It is true that I loved him, but his virtue has opposed me; and now love is turned to hate, and I shall cast him into prison."[3]

She was as good as her word, and thus it fell out that Joseph was placed in the king's prison. But God would not suffer the innocent to be punished. He illumined his cell with a

[1] Tabari, i. p. 217.

[2] Yaschar, p. 1107. Nearly all these incidents in the life of Joseph are common to Jewish and Mussulman traditions.

[3] Tabari, p. 220; Weil, p. 112; both taken from the Rabbinic story in Yaschar, p. 1195.

celestial light, made a fountain spring up in the midst of it, and a fruit-bearing tree to grow before the door.[1]

Joseph was five years in prison, and then the King of the Greeks, who was warring against Egypt, sent an ambassador to Rajjan desiring peace. But his true purpose was to throw him off his guard, that he might with treachery destroy him. The ambassador sought the advice of an old Greek woman who had long lived in Egypt. She said, "I know of only one way of accomplishing what you desire, and that is to bribe the butler or the baker of the king to poison him; but it would be better to put the drug in the wine than in the bread."

The ambassador then bribed the chief baker with much gold, and he promised to put poison in Pharaoh's meat. After that he told the old woman that one of the two she had named to him had been persuaded to destroy the king.

Then the ambassador returned, and when he was gone, the woman disclosed all to Pharaoh, and she said, "Either the butler or the baker has taken a bribe to poison thee, O king." Thereupon the king cast both into prison, till it should be made manifest which was guilty. Now the name of the baker was Mohlib, and that of the butler was Kamra.

After they had been in prison some time, they had dreams; and they told their dreams to Joseph.

The chief butler said, "I saw in my dream, and, behold, a vine was before me. And in the vine were three branches; and as it sprouted it brought forth buds, and immediately they ripened into clusters, and became grapes. And I saw till they gave the cup of Pharaoh into my hand, and I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of the dream. The three branches are the three Fathers of the world, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose children are to be enslaved in Egypt in clay and brickwork, and in all labours of the

[1] Weil, p. 113.

face of the field; but afterward shall they be delivered by the hand of three shepherds. As for the cup thou didst give into Pharaoh's hand, it is the vial of the wrath of God, which Pharaoh is to drink at the last. But thou, the chief butler, shalt receive a good reward: the three branches to thee are three days until thy liberation."

Joseph, leaving his higher trust in God, now turned and reposed it in man, for he added, "Be thou mindful of me when it shall be well with thee, and obtain my release from this prison-house."

And the chief baker, seeing that Joseph had interpreted well, began to speak with an impatient tongue, and said to Joseph, "I also saw in my dream, and, behold, three baskets of hot loaves were upon my head; and in the upper basket of all, delicious meat for Pharaoh, made by the confectioner; and the birds ate them from the basket upon my head."

Joseph answered, "This is its interpretation. The three baskets are the three enslavements with which the house of Israel are to be enslaved. But thou, the chief baker, shalt receive an evil award. At the end of three days, Pharaoh shall take away thy head from thy body, and will hang thee upon a gibbet, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee."

And it fell out as Joseph had foretold. But, because Joseph had withdrawn from putting his trust in God, and had laid it on man, therefore he was forgotten by the butler and left in prison for two years more.[1]

Joseph had now been seven years in prison, and this is why he had been so long there. Potiphar's wife persuaded her friends to bring against Joseph the same accusation that she had laid against him, and their husbands complained to Pharaoh; so he was kept in prison that he might not cause strife and evil in the city.[2]

[1] Targums, i. pp. 296-9; Midrash, fol. 45; Yaschar, p. 1200.
[2] Midrash, fol. 45.

When the seven years were elapsed, one day the butler came to the prison and bade Joseph follow him, as the King had been troubled with a dream, and desired to have it explained. But Joseph refused to leave till his innocence was proclaimed. He named to the butler the ladies who had attended the banquet of Zuleika, and before whom she had confessed that she loved him, and besought that they might be called as witnesses before the king. Pharaoh agreed; the ladies, when interrogated, related all that had been said, and Zuleika herself confessed the truth.

Then Pharaoh sent and fetched Joseph out of prison, and gave him his liberty.

"I dreamed," said the king, when Joseph stood before his throne, "that seven lean cows ate seven fat cows, and that seven empty husks ate seven full ears of corn. What is the interpretation of this dream?"

"God will give thee seven fruitful years, and then seven years of famine," answered Joseph. "Therefore must thou gather together all the superfluity in the first seven years to sustain the starving people in the seven years of dearth."[1]

The king was so well pleased with this interpretation, that he made Joseph his chief treasurer in Potiphar's room. Joseph went through all the land, and purchased corn, which, on account of the good harvests, was at a very low price.

One day as he rode out of the town to view his magazines, he observed a beggar-woman whose whole appearance was most woe-begone, but bespoke her having seen better days. Joseph approached her with compassion, and held out to her a handful of gold. She hesitated about taking it, and said, sobbing, "Great prophet of God! I am not worthy to receive this at thy hand, though it was my love for thee which was the first step on the ladder on which thou mountedst to thy present exaltation." And Joseph saw that the poor beggar-woman was Zuleika, wife of Potiphar.

[1] Weil, p. 116; Tabari, i. c. 44; Gen. xli.; Yaschar, pp. 1202-8.

He asked about her husband, and learned that shortly after he had been deposed from office, he had died of distress of mind and body. "Thou hast thought evil of me," she said, "but I have great excuses, thou wast so beautiful; and moreover I was young, and only a wife in name, for I am as I left my mother's womb, a maiden, with the seal of God upon me."

Then Joseph was filled with joy. He extended his hands to her, and he brought her to the king's palace, and she was treated there with care, as a sister, till she recovered her bloom and joy, and then Joseph took her to be his wife.[1] And by her he had two sons before the seven years of dearth began, during which the Egyptians gave first their gold, then their apparel, and all their moveable goods; then their land, then their slaves, and last of all themselves, their wives and children, as bondsmen, that they might have food.

But not only did Egypt suffer, the adjoining lands were also afflicted with scarcity. There was no corn in Canaan, and Jacob sent his ten sons into Egypt to buy corn, retaining Benjamin at home. He cautioned his sons not to create mistrust by their numbers, nor cause the evil eye to light on them, and advised them to enter the city of Pharaoh by different gates, for it had ten.

But Joseph expected that his brothers would be coming to Egypt, and therefore he bade the gatekeepers every day bring him the names of those who had entered the city. One day one porter gave him the name of Reuben, son of Jacob; and so on to the tenth, Asher, son of Jacob. Joseph at once gave orders for every storehouse to be closed with the exception of one, and gave the keepers of the open magazine the names of his brothers, and said to them, "When these people arrive take them prisoners, and bring them before me."

[1] This conclusion of the loves of Zuleika and Joseph completes the romance, and makes it a most popular subject for poets in the East. Both Jewish and Mussulman traditions give Zuleika a very different character from that which Holy Scripture leads one to attribute to her.

And when they appeared before him, he charged them with being spies: "For," said he, "if ye were true men, ye would have come in together; but ye entered by different gates, and that shows that ye are set upon evil."[1]

When, to excuse themselves, they told their family history, he bade them go and bring Benjamin down to him, and, to secure their return, he kept Simeon in prison as hostage.

When Joseph wanted to imprison Simeon, his brothers desired to assist him by force, but Simeon refused their assistance. Joseph ordered seventy fighting men of Pharaoh's body-guard to cast him down and handcuff him. But when they approached, Simeon gave a scream, and the seventy fell back on the ground, and their teeth went down their throats. "Hah!" said Joseph to his son Manasseh, who stood near him, "throw a chain about his neck."

Manasseh dealt Simeon a blow, and chained him. "Then," said Simeon, "this blow comes from one of the family."[2]

Jacob, reluctant to part with Benjamin, was however obliged to do so, being pressed with famine. Joseph received the brethren, measured out to them the wheat, and, by his orders, his steward secretly put the silver cup of Joseph into the sack of Benjamin. Then at the gate of the city they were charged with theft, and were brought back to the palace of Joseph.

"What is the penalty due to him who has stolen my cup?" asked Joseph.

"Let him be thy slave," answered the brethren, feeling confident in their innocence. But when the sacks were opened, and his cup was found in that of Benjamin, they said to their youngest brother, "Woe to thee! what hast thou done? Wast thou resolved to follow the example of thy lost brother, who stole his grandfather Laban's idol, and his aunt's girdle?"

But as they had sworn to their father to restore Benjamin to him, they besought Joseph to take one of them in the place of

[1] Midrash, Jalkut, fol. 46. [2] Ibid.

Benjamin. But Joseph persisted that he would keep Benjamin.

Then said Reuben to his brothers, "Go back to our father, and tell him all that has occurred; I, the eldest of you, who undertook on the security of my life to bring Benjamin home, must remain here till he himself calls me back, for he will see that we have stood hostages for a thief." [1]

Now Reuben had a fierce temper, and when he became furious, all the down or hair on his skin bristled and penetrated his clothes like needles; he pulled off his head-gear, and uttered a scream so terrible that all who heard it died of terror. This frenzy of Reuben's could only be abated by one of the family of Jacob placing his hand upon him. Reuben went up to Joseph, and said, "O great one of Egypt, I am in a rage; and if I scream out, all who hear me will die of fright. Restore to me my brother, or I shall scream, and then thou and all the inhabitants of Egypt will perish."

Joseph knowing that Reuben spoke the truth, and seeing his hair bristling through his clothes like needle-points, and knowing also that if any one of the house of Jacob were to lay his hand on the body of Reuben, his force would pass away,—he said to Ephraim, his son, "Go softly, so that Reuben may not observe thee, and lay thine hand upon his shoulder that his anger may abate." Ephraim did as he was bidden, and instantly the hairs of Reuben sank, and his fury passed away, and he felt that the power to scream was gone from him.

Then Joseph said calmly, "I shall retain Benjamin, do what you will."

Reuben made an effort to scream, but it was unavailing. Then astonishment got hold of him, and he said to Joseph, "I think that there must be one of the family of Jacob in this house." [2]

[1] Weil, p. 122.

[2] Tabari, i. p. 247; taken from the Rabbinic Yaschar (Sepher Hajaschar), p. 1226.

Then Joseph ordered Benjamin to be chained. And when Judah saw this, he roared like a lion, and his voice was so piercing, that Chuschim, the son of Dan, who was in Canaan, heard him, and began to roar also.

And Judah drew his sword, and roared, and pursued the Egyptian soldiers sent to bind Benjamin, and the fear of him fell on them all, and they fell, and he smote them up to the gates of the king's palace; and he roared again, and all the walls of Memphis rocked, and the earth shook, and Pharaoh was shaken off his throne and fell on his face, and the roar of Judah was heard four hundred miles off.

Joseph feared to be killed by Judah. When Judah was angry, blood spirted from his right eye. Judah wore five sets of clothes upon him, one above another; and when he was angry, his heart swelled so as to tear them all. Joseph, fearing him, roared at him, and his voice shivered a pillar of the palace into fine dust, so that Judah thought, "This is a great hero! he can master me."[1]

Then said Judah to Joseph, "Let our brother go, or we will devastate this land."

Then Joseph answered, "Go home, and tell your father that a wild beast has devoured him."

Then Judah beckoned to his brother Naphtali, who was very swift of foot, and said to him, "Run speedily and count all the streets in Egypt, and come swiftly back and tell me."

But Simeon said, "There is no need; I will break a stone out of the mountains and throw it down on the land of Egypt, and will utterly destroy it."[2]

Then Joseph saw that it was not well to press them further; so he took a bowl, and filled it, and looked into it as though he were divining by it, and said suddenly, "Ye are liars! Ye told me that your brother Joseph was dead, and behold he is alive, and I see him in this bowl! Ye sold him."

[1] Midrash. Jalkut, fol. 47; Yaschar, p. 1225; Berescheth Rabba, fol. 84, col. 4.

[2] Yaschar, p. 1226.

Then he bade Zuleika bring the deed of sale, and he handed it to Judah. Thereupon the brothers knew him, and fell down before him, and besought him to pardon them.

Then he told them how God had exalted him, and he comforted their hearts, and after that he asked news of his father.

They replied, "He is blind with grief at having to part with Benjamin."

Therefore Joseph said, "Take my shirt and go to my father, and pass my shirt before his face, and he will recover his sight. Then take all that you have, and come down into Egypt."[1]

When the caravan left Memphis, the sons of Jacob carried with them abundance of corn and the shirt of Joseph; and the wind was in their backs, and blew the scent of the shirt from the gate of Memphis into Canaan. And Jacob snuffed the wind, and said, "O women! O children! I can smell Joseph."

They all thought, "He is deranged," but they said, "It is forty years since Joseph died, and thou canst think of nothing else; thou art always insisting that he is alive."

When the caravan was near the dwelling of Jacob, Judah brought the shirt of Joseph in, and said, "On the day upon which I bore the bloody coat of Joseph, I said a wolf had devoured him. Now I bring thee good news." And he cast the shirt upon the face of his father, and Jacob recovered his sight.[2]

The story in the Sepher Hadjaschar, or Book of Jasher, is more poetical. As the sons were approaching the home of their father, Sarah, the adopted daughter of Asher, came to meet them. She was very beautiful and graceful and modest, and could play sweetly on the harp. They gave her the kiss of peace, and told her the tidings. Then she went singing

[1] This was the shirt given Abraham by Gabriel, to preserve him from the fire into which Nimrod cast him; it was fragrant with the odours of Paradise.

[2] Koran, Sura xii.; Tabari, i. pp. 250, 251.

home, accompanying her words upon the harp, "Joseph is not dead, God has been his protector, and he lives, and is governor in Egypt; rejoice and be glad of heart!" Then Jacob was filled with hope and consolation, and he said, "Because thou hast revived my spirit, my daughter, death shall never seize on thee." [1]

After that, Jacob went down into Egypt, that he might see his son Joseph before he died. And when they met, they fell on one another's neck, and wept, and kissed; and Jacob said to his son, "Tell me, I pray thee, what evil thy brothers did to thee." But Joseph answered, "Nay, my father, I will tell thee only how great good the Lord did to me."

We have heard how that Joseph married Zuleika, the wife of Potiphar, but this is not a universal tradition. It is said in Genesis that he had to wife Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On. Many suppose that this Asenath was the daughter of Potiphar, the old master of Joseph, and that her mother was Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and the following story is related of Asenath:—

She was a maid of wondrous beauty, of which she was very proud, and she greatly despised all men, though she had never seen any, saving her father. She dwelt in a tower next to her father's house, ten stories high, which contained everything that the eye could desire, and also idols in gold and silver, which she daily worshipped. Asenath was as tall as Sarah, as comely as Rebekah, and as beautiful as Rachel.

Now Joseph, being on his way through Egypt, sent down to the priest Potipherah, to command him to bring his daughter before him. Thereupon Potipherah was glad, and told his daughter that Joseph, the Strength of God, was coming, and that she should become his wife. At this Asenath was very indignant, and spoke angry words of Joseph, declaring that she would be wife to no man, saving to a king's son. Now, while she thus spake, Joseph came, seated in the chariot of Pharaoh,

[1] Yaschar, p. 1227.

which was all of gold, drawn by four horses white as snow, with gilt reins. And Joseph was dressed in a radiant tunic, with gold embroidery, and a robe of crimson woven with gold hung from his shoulders, and a fillet of gold was about his temples, and in his hand was an olive branch, full of fruit.

Then Potipherah came with his wife, and did him homage. Joseph entered the hall, and the doors were shut, and Asenath beheld him, and she was troubled at what she had said of him, and thought, "This is the sun come from heaven; I knew not before that Joseph was divine. What father hath begotten so much beauty, or what mother borne so much light?"

Then Joseph said, "Who was that woman that was here, but hath gone?" for Asenath had hastened to her chamber.

And Potipherah said, "My lord, my daughter is a maiden, and very modest; she hath, till this day, seen no man save myself. If it please thee, she shall come and salute thee."

Then Joseph said, "If thy daughter be a maiden, I will treat her as a sister."

They brought her into his presence, and Potipherah said to her, "Salute thy brother, who hateth women as thou hatest men."

And Asenath said, "Hail, blessed of God, who giveth life to all!"

Then Potipherah bade his daughter kiss Joseph, but when she approached him, he thrust forth his hand and said, "It becomes not the man worshipping the living God to kiss an outlandish woman whose lips kiss dumb idols."

Asenath, hearing these words, fell into great grief and wept. Joseph had compassion on her, and laid his hand on her head and blessed her, and Asenath was glad because of his benediction. But she went to her couch in the tower, and was ill with fear and pain, and she turned with penitence from her idols, and renounced them, and cast them out of her window.

Joseph ate and drank, and went his way, promising to return in eight days. Then Asenath put on a black robe, and closed

her door and prayed, and cast her food to the dogs, and laid her head on the pavement, and wept seven days.

Then an angel visited her, and gave her honey gathered from the roses of Paradise; and the honey was so sweet, that when she had tasted it she could not doubt whence it had come, and she felt herself enlightened by the true God; and the angel signed the honey with the cross, and the trace of his finger was blood. Along with faith and hope, charity enlightened her heart, and she besought of the angel to give of this honey to the seven maidens who attended on her; and when they had obtained this favour, they all became like their mistress, servants of the Most High. Then the angel bade her lay aside her tears and black garment, and rejoice, for her prayer was heard.

At that moment one of the servants of Potipherah entered, saying, "Behold, Joseph, the Strength of God, approaches; go ye out to meet him."

Now when Joseph had alighted down from his chariot, he came into the hall; and when he knew that Asenath had cast away her idols, he rejoiced greatly, and he sought her in marriage of Potipherah, and the Priest of On made a great supper, and gave his daughter to Joseph, and he called Joseph the lord of lords, and Asenath he called the daughter of the Most High.[1]

[1] Vita Asseneth, filiæ Potipharis; a Greek apocryphal book, in Fabricius, iii. p. 85.

XXIX.

THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS.

THE "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" is one of the seventy-two apocryphal books of the Old Testament which were at one time in circulation, and, according to Epiphanius, it formed one of the twenty-two canonical books sent by the Jews to Ptolemy, king of Egypt.[1]

It is a work of Jewish origin, which has been tampered with and interpolated by Christian copyists. S. Augustine numbers it with the Apocrypha; he says, "There are the apocryphal books of the Old Testament: the works falsely attributed to Enoch, the Patriarchs, the Discourse of Joseph, the Assumption of Moses, the pseudographia of Abraham, Eldad and Medad, Elias the prophet, the prophet Zephaniah, Zechariah, Baruch, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Daniel."

Curiously enough, the Testament of the Patriarchs contains a large number of alleged quotations from the Book of Enoch, which are not, however, to be found in that book as we now have it.

This Testament was read by the Jews at the time of Christ's coming, and S. Paul seems to have been acquainted with it, for he quotes it, "*Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,*"[2] and again he quotes the Testament of Levi, "*The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*"[3] S. Jerome re-

[1] Lib. de Mensuris et Ponderibus, § 10.

[2] Ephes. v. 14.

[3] 1 Thess. ii. 16.

marks on this, "The Apostle Paul quoted from the hidden prophets and from those books which are called Apocrypha," and he adds, "That he did so in several other places is very evident."[1] And Origen says, "It is evident that many examples were quoted and inserted in the New Testament by the Apostles and the Evangelists from those Scriptures which we do not read as canonical, but these passages are found in the apocryphal books, and it is evident that these passages were extracted from them;" and he gives the reason why that was lawful to the Apostles which is not lawful to us.

He says, "It may have been, that the Apostles and Evangelists, filled with the Holy Ghost, may have known what was to be taken from these writings and what was to be rejected; but for us to presume to do such a thing would be full of danger, not having the Spirit in the same measure to guide us."[2]

Robert Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln, translated the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs into Latin, in 1242, according to Matthew Paris. "Also, in this time, Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, a man most skilled in Latin and Greek, translated accurately the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs from the Greek into Latin; which for many years had been unknown and concealed, through the jealousy of the Jews, because of the prophecies concerning our Saviour therein contained. But the Greeks, the most indefatigable investigators of all writings, being the first who learnt about this, translated it from Hebrew into Greek, and kept it to themselves until our own time. For in the time of S. Jerome, or of any other holy interpreter, it could not in any way whatever come to the knowledge of the Christians, on account of the scheming malice of the Jews. Therefore the above-named Bishop, assisted by Master Nicholas, a Greek, and clerk to the Abbey of S. Albans,

[1] Commen. in Eph., loc. cit.
[2] Prolog. in fin. Duarum Hom. in Cant. Canticorum.

translated clearly, evidently, and word for word, into Latin, that glorious treatise, to the strengthening of the Christian faith, and to the greater confusion of the Jews."[1]

The Testaments were published by Grabe, at Oxford, in 1698, and were republished by Fabricius in his "Codex Pseudepigraphus Vet. Testamenti," at Hamburg, in 1722.[2]

[1] Matt. Paris, Chronicle, ed. Bohn, vol. i. pp. 437, 438.
[2] T. i., pp. 496–759.

XXX.

JOB.

JOB was the great grandson of Esau. He was the son of Amos, the son of Zara, the son of Esau, and he had to wife Rahma, daughter of Ephraim, son of Joseph. Ephraim left two sons who were prophets after him; but amongst the children of Esau, there was no prophet, saving Job.

Job was more patient than any other prophet; therefore it is said of him in the Koran, "Certainly we have found this excellent servant patient."[1]

The Rabbis say that Job, Jethro, and Balaam were King Pharaoh's three councillors, and they were also his chief magicians. They, by their enchantments, drew a line round the land of Egypt, so that no slave could escape out of it; for when he came to the line, he was held back and could not overleap it. But when the Israelites broke away and disregarded the enchanted line, Job, Jethro, and Balaam gave up their witchcrafts, and turned to the service of the living God.[2]

Job lived in Bashan, which lies between Damascus and Ramla, and there he reigned as a prince. Job had five hundred yoke of oxen, and to every yoke there was a she-ass to carry the instruments of husbandry. He had also a thousand flocks of sheep, and a thousand sheep in each flock. He had ten children, seven sons and three daughters; all were grown up.[3]

[1] Koran, Sura xxxviii. v. 43-4. Job in Arabic is Aïub.
[2] Eisenmenger, ii. p. 439.
[3] Tabari, i. p. 256.

In the "Testament of Job,"[1] we read that this great man, illumined by the Divine light, comprehended that the idols which his people adored were no gods, and that there was but one only true God, the Creator and Preserver of all things. There was near his house an idol which attracted great worship. He prayed the Lord to show him whether this idol were a demon or not; and he promised, in that case, to destroy it and purify the place; and this he was able to do, being a sovereign.

God sent him an angel, who illumined him, and strengthened him in his resolution. So he destroyed the idol, and abolished its worship. But this act drew upon him the wrath of Satan. The angel had foreseen the disasters which would befall Job if he resolved to strive against the Evil One, and he had warned Job what to expect; but Job answered that, being convinced of the truth, he was ready to suffer for it.

Satan presented himself at the door of Job's house. He had taken upon him the form of a pilgrim, and he said to the portress, "I desire to see the faithful servant of the Most High."

Now Job, who had received the gift of prophecy, knew that this was the Evil One, and he refused to see him, saying to the gate-keeper when she brought the message, "Tell him that I am occupied, and that I cannot receive him."

Satan retired, but he returned soon after, disguised as a beggar, and he said to the portress, "Go and ask Job to give me a morsel of bread."

"Tell him," replied Job, "that I will not give him of the bread I eat, because I will not have anything in common with him. But offer him this burnt crust, that he may not say I sent him empty away."

The servant, not venturing to give the burnt crust, because she was not aware who the beggar was, offered him some good bread. But Satan, who knew what Job had commanded,

[1] Maï (Angelus), Test. Job; Romæ, 1839.

thrust it away, saying, "Begone, bad servant, and bring me the bread you were told to give me."

The portress replied: "You say well, I am a bad servant, for I have not done that which I was commanded to do. Here is the crust my master ordered me to give you. He will not have anything in common with you; no! not even the bread he eats; but he sends you this, that it may not be said of him that he dismissed the empty from his door without an alms."

Satan took the charred crust, and bade the servant tell Job that he would soon render to him such measure as he had dealt to him.[1]

Then Satan ascended to God, and desired permission to afflict and prove Job. And when leave was given him, he descended to earth, and breathed such a hot blast, that all the cattle, and sheep, and servants of Job were burnt up. Then Satan took the form of a slave, and ran and told the prophet. Job answered, "*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!*"

Then Satan went and shook the earth under the house where the sons and daughters of Job were assembled, and the house fell and destroyed them all.

Satan immediately hastened in the disguise of a servant to Job, and told him what had taken place. He said, "O Job! God has shaken down the house about your children, and they are dead. Had you seen their bleeding faces and broken limbs, and their brains bespattering the stones, and had heard their piercing cries, you would have been heart-broken."

Job wept, and lifted his eyes to God; and he knew who addressed him, and he said, "Satan! it is thou who comest to tempt me and to cast doubt into my heart, and mistrust in the wisdom and goodness of God; get thee hence."

Satan then blew a hot breath up the nose of Job, and poisoned all his blood. His body became scarlet next day, and the day after was covered with ulcers from head to foot;

[1] Maï (Angelus), Test. Job; Romæ, 1839.

there was no whole place in him, except the head, the tongue, the eyes, and the heart; for over these portions God had not given Satan power.

All Job's friends deserted him and fled; Rahma,[1] his wife, alone remained, and she spent on him the rest of his possessions, but he was not cured of his disease. And this was why all his possessions went—Satan stole them away; and thus in a short time he was reduced to penury, and Rahma went from house to house begging alms for his support.

Satan saw that he could not triumph so long as the wife remained with her husband; she was a comfort and joy to him, and he cared not for possessions, or children, or health, so long as his wife was at his side; therefore, he sought occasion to separate them. One day, as Rahma was carrying food to Job, Satan presented himself before her in the form of an old man, and asked her, "O Rahma! art thou not the daughter of Ephraim, the son of Joseph?" She replied, "I am."

Then said the Evil Angel, "In what condition do I see thee?" She answered, "My husband Job has fallen into poverty, and I serve him."

He said, "Do not serve him, for when thou touchest him, the poison of his disease passes into thy veins."

She replied, "He is my husband, and I must attend on him as long as I live, in health or sickness."

Then Satan retired, despairing of seducing her from her duty. Rahma told Job all that had been said to her.

The prophet said, "O woman! he whom you have seen is Satan, and he desired to separate us. Do not speak to him again when he addresses you."

Some time after, the Evil One presented himself before the faithful wife under the form of a beautiful youth; and said to her, "What woman art thou, who art so radiant in beauty?" She answered, "I am the wife of a poor man, named Job."

He said, "O woman! what hast thou, with thy wondrous

[1] In the "Testament of Job" she is called Sitis.

beauty, to do with a poor sick husband? Go, be divorced from thy husband, and marry me. I have great possessions, and I will treat thee as a queen."

She answered, "I am the wife of a prophet; I desire nothing higher."

Then Satan withdrew, despairing of seducing her from her duty. Rahma told Job all that had been said to her.

Job said, "O woman! did I not tell thee to speak with him no more; why hast thou disobeyed my voice? That was Satan, and he sought to separate us. Do not speak to him again when he addresses thee."

Some time after, the Evil One presented himself before the faithful wife, under the form of an angel; and said to her, "O woman, daughter of a prophet! I am an angel sent from God with a message to thee."

She said, "What message?"

He said, "Behold the Most High is wroth with Job, for he renders no thanks for all the good things He gave to him; therefore hath the Lord rejected him from being a prophet, and he shall fall from worse to worse, till he is cast into the flames of hell; we, the angels of God, curse him, and do thou, daughter of a prophet, avoid him, lest thou come into the same condemnation."

When Rahma heard these words, she wept, and said, "After so many afflictions, shall the name of Job be taken from the number of the prophets? And after so many sufferings shall he perish everlastingly?"

Then she went to Job and told him all that had been said to her.

Job was greatly angered when she told him the tenor of the words, and he cried out, "Have I not warned thee these two times not to speak with him, who is the author of my affliction? Wait till I am well, and I will give thee a hundred strokes with a rod."[1]

[1] Tabari, i. c. lxvi; Abulfeda, pp. 27–29.

But the story is told differently by others. It is said that the third time Satan appeared as a baker, and Rahma wanted bread, but had nought to pay. Then said the pretended baker, "Thou hast locks of very beautiful hair; cut off thy hair and give it me, and thou shalt take the largest of my loaves."

Then she cut off three locks and gave them to him.

And when Job saw that she had done this, he was filled with fury, and he swore that when he was well he would beat her for having cut off her hair.[1]

Thus Satan triumphed in making Job to sin by swearing, and threatening to ill-treat a true and good woman.

Next the Evil One went as an angel, and announced to all the people of the land, that he came from God to declare to them that Job was no more reckoned among the prophets; and that they were not to trust his words and believe his doctrine, but were to return to the worship of those gods he had blasphemed and cast out.

Soon after, Job heard his three friends, Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar, converse together, and repeat what had been told them by Satan; and the thought that he was supposed to be rejected by God from among His prophets, was so distressing to him, that he cried out, "Truly, O God! evil has befallen me; but Thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy."[2] That is, the words of men are cruel, but Thou, O God, wilt deliver me out of all my evils.

Job was sick for seven years, and all that while his wife ministered to him.

But the mediæval commentators draw a very different picture of this wife, relying on the words of Scripture which make her tempt Job to "*curse God and die.*" They say that her tongue was one of the plagues of Job. That he bore patiently the loss of his cattle, of his children, and of his health, was indeed wonderful; but that he also endured the nagging of his wife with equanimity,—that was the most wonderful of all.

[1] Testament of Job.

[2] Koran, Sura xxi. v. 83.

Then God looked on Job and had compassion upon him, and he said to him, "Strike the earth with thy foot."[1] Job stamped, and from the dung-heap on which he had been seated a clear stream of water issued, the sweetest that there is, and the water continued to flow. Then God said to Job, "Wash in this water."

Rahma, the wife of Job, poured the water upon his head and over his body, and he washed himself. All the sores that were on his flesh disappeared, and he was healed; there was not a scar left, and he appeared more beautiful than before he was afflicted.

Then God said to Job, "Drink of the water."

Then all the worms that were in the inside of Job died, and he was quite whole. Now this took place in Bashan, and the fountain remains to this day, and is called Qarya-Aïyub, and the city near which it is, Aïrs-Aïyub. "I have seen the city of the fountain," says the Persian translator of Tabari: "every person who goes there, affected by internal or external maladies, and washes and drinks of that water, is healed of his disease."[2]

Then God said to Job, "Fulfil thy vow, and take in thine hand a bundle of rods."[3] But the rods God told him to take were light sticks; and he took a hundred of these, and bound them together and smote Rahma with them, and he did not hurt her. By this action of Job, the Mussulman doctors support their advice to those who have taken rash oaths to clear themselves by a subterfuge. Thus, if a man has sworn he will not enter his house again, he is recommended to allow himself to be bound hand and foot and be carried into his home. Or, if he has sworn to recite the whole Koran, it will be sufficient for him to say the word "Koran," and listen to the imaun reading before the assembly.

Then God restored to Job double all that he had lost; and

[1] Koran, Sura xxxviii. v. 41.
[2] Tabari, i. p. 263.
[3] Koran, Sura xxxviii. v. 43.

Job lived, after he was recovered of his disease, twenty years, and he died at the age of ninety-three.

The worms which had devoured the body of the prophet, God turned into silk-worms; and the flies which had bitten him and tormented his sores, converted He into honey-bees; and before this there were neither silk-worms nor honey-bees on the earth. Also the rain and the snow which fell within his possessions, were grains of gold and pearl.

Isidore of Seville places the fountain which cured Job in Idumæa. He says, it is clear during three months of the year, troubled during the next three, then for three months it is green, and for the last three, it is red.

In the "Testament of Job," we read some details concerning his death, written by his brother Nahor.

After three days of sickness, Job, lying on his bed, saw the angels come to receive his soul. After having divided his substance between his seven sons (for, after his troubles, he became the father of seven sons and three daughters), he gave his daughters three mantles of inestimable price, which he had received from heaven. To the eldest, Hemera (Jemima), he gave his harp; to the second, Cassia (Keziah), he handed his censer; to the third, Keren-happuch, he remitted his tambourine: and as he sang his last hymn to the Most High on his death-bed, Hemera and Keren-happuch accompanied him with harp and timbrel, and Cassia cast up fumes of sweet incense. Thus they greeted the messengers of heaven who came for the soul of Job.

XXXI.

JETHRO.

As has already been related, Jethro formed one of the council of Pharaoh till he found that his incantations had no effect on the Israelites. He escaped from Egypt before Job; for he had found in the palace of the king the staff of Joseph which had been cut from the Tree of Life, and therewith he hied him into the land of Midian, along with his daughter Zipporah.

According to Mussulman tradition, Jethro, whom the Arabs call Schohair or Schohaib, was a great prophet; and he was sent by God to the Midianites to call them to repentance and the rejection of polytheism. Jethro was old and nearly blind. He preached to the people, and exhorted them with many words and for a long season, but all his words were in vain; the Midianites would not be converted, and at length they openly accused him of being a false prophet, and denied that God had sent him.

Therefore God gave over this nation to destruction. He sent a fiery breath upon the land, and the people could not bear the great heat, and retired into the fields, where there was shadow; for God sent a cloud to hide the face of the sun, and it cast a blot of shade upon the fields. But there were old men and women and little children, and the sick who could not leave the city and take refuge in the shade.

Slowly the cloud came down from heaven, like the lid of a saucepan, and covered all the Midianites that were in the field,

and the cloud was of fire, and they fried "as fish fry in an oven." Then the angel Gabriel gave a great shout, and all that were in the city, saving Jethro and his family, died of fright when they heard his cry.

Then Jethro lived in the land of Midian till Moses came to him out of Egypt.[1]

[1] Tabari, i. c. lxvii; Abulfeda, p. 31.

XXXII.

MOSES.[1]

I. ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

AFTER the death of Jacob, his descendants were drawn into servitude by soft and hypocritical speeches. Fifty-four years had passed since the death of Joseph.

Joseph had had the good fortune to acquire the favour of Mechron, the son and successor of that Pharaoh who had raised him from the dungeon to be second in the kingdom. Almost all the inhabitants of Egypt had loved Joseph; only a few voices were raised in murmurs at a foreigner exercising such extensive powers.

The successors of the patriarchs mingled among the people of the land and learned their ways; and many of them abandoned the rite of circumcision, and spoke the language of Mizraem.

Then God withdrew His protection for a while; and the former love of the Egyptians towards the Hebrews was turned

[1] The early portion of the life of Moses has been elaborated from Rabbinic sources by Dr. B. Beer. Unfortunately he died before the work was completed, and it has been published as a fragment by his friend, G. Wolf. It extends only as far as his marriage with Zipporah. (Leben Moses nach Auffassung der Jüdischen Sage, von Dr. B. Beer; ein Fragment. Leipzig, 1863.) It is, for the most part, compiled from the Sepher Hajasher, or Book of Jasher.

into implacable hatred. By degrees the privileges of the children of Israel were encroached upon, and they were oppressed with heavy taxes, from which hitherto they had been held exempt.

Afterwards the king exacted from them their labour without pay; he built a great castle, and required the Hebrews to erect it for him at their own cost.

Twenty-two years after the death of Joseph, Levi died, who had outlived all his other brothers.

Fields, vineyards, and houses, which Joseph had given to his brethren, were now reclaimed by the natives of Egypt, and the children of Israel were enslaved.

The Egyptians, effeminate, and hating work, fond of pleasure and display, had envied the prosperity of the Hebrews, who had thriven in Goshen, and whose wives bore sometimes six and sometimes twelve infants at a birth.

They also feared lest this people, increasing upon them, should become more numerous than they, and should seize upon the power, and enslave the native population.

Nine years after the death of Joseph, King Mechron died, and was succeeded by his son Melol.

But before pursuing the history of the oppression of the Hebrews, we must relate some events that had occurred before this time.

When the body of Jacob, according to his last will, had been taken to the cave of Machpelah, Esau and his sons and a large body of followers hastened to oppose the burial of Jacob. After the death of Isaac, Esau and Jacob had come to an agreement, by which all the moveable property of the father was made over to Esau, and all that was immoveable, especially the burial cave, was apportioned to Jacob. But now Esau desired to set aside this agreement, and, as first-born, to claim the tomb as his, trusting that the sons of Jacob could not prove the agreement.

But no sooner had he raised this objection, than Naphtali,

who was swift of foot, ran into Egypt, and returned in a few hours with the writing of agreement.

Esau, seeing himself baffled, had recourse to arms; and a fight took place, in which Esau was killed, and his followers were put to flight or taken as captives to Egypt, where they became the slaves of the Israelites. Amongst these captives was Zepho, son of Eliphaz, son of Esau.

Even in Joseph's lifetime, the Edomites made incursions into Egypt to recover their captive relatives, but their attempts led to no other result than the tightening of the chains which bound the captives. Later, however, Zepho succeeded in effecting his escape, and he took refuge with Angias, king of Dinhaba (Ethiopia), who made him chief captain of his host.

Zepho persuaded the king to make war upon Egypt. Among the servants of Angias was a youth of fifteen, named Balaam, son of Beor, very skilful in the arts of witchcraft. The king bade the youthful necromancer divine who would succeed in the proposed war. Balaam formed chariots and horses and fighting men of wax, plunged them in water, which he stirred with palm twigs; and it was seen by all who stood by, that the men and horses representing the Egyptians and Hebrews floated, whereas those representing the Ethiopians sank.

Angias, deterred by this augury, refused to have anything to do with a war against Egypt. Then Zepho left him, and betook himself to the land of the Hittites, and he succeeded in combining that nation, the Edomites, and the Ishmaelites together in making an invasion of Egypt.

To repel them, the Hebrews were summoned from the land of Goshen, but the Egyptians would not receive their allies into the camp, fearing lest they should unite with their kindred nations, and deliver them up to destruction.

Zepho now asked Balaam, who had followed him, to divine the end of the battle, but the attempt failed; and the future remained closed to him. But Zepho, full of confidence, led

the combined army against the Egyptians, repulsed them at every point, and drove them back upon the camp of the Hebrews. Then the Israelites charged the advancing forces flushed with victory, who, little expecting such a determined onslaught, were thrown into confusion, and routed with great loss. The Hebrews pursued them to the confines of Ethiopia, cutting them down all along the way, and then they desisted and returned: and on numbering their band—they were but a handful—they found that they had not lost one man. They now looked out for their allies, the Egyptians, and found that they had deserted and fled; therefore, full of wrath, they returned to Goshen in triumph, and slew the deserters, with many words of contempt and ridicule.[1]

Thus the Hebrews were puffed up with pride, regarding themselves as invincible; and the Egyptians were filled with dread, lest this small people should resolve on seizing upon the supremacy, and should subjugate them.

Therefore the reigning Pharaoh and his council assembled to consult what should be done; and this was decided:—"The cities Pithom and Rameses (Tanis and Heliopolis) are not strong enough to withstand a foe, therefore they must be strengthened." And a royal decree went forth over all the land of Egypt and Goshen, commanding all the inhabitants, both Egyptians and Hebrews, to build. Pharaoh himself set the example by taking trowel and basket in hand, and putting a brick mould on his neck. Whoever saw this hastened to do likewise, and all who were reluctant were stimulated by the overseers with these words, "See how the king works. Will you not imitate his activity?"

Thus the Israelites went to the work, and laid the mould upon their necks, little suspecting the guile that was in the hearts of the king and his councillors.

At the close of the first day, the Hebrews had made a large

[1] Yaschar, pp. 1241-53. The history of Zepho is quite a romance, too long for insertion here.

number of bricks; and this number was now imposed upon them as the amount of their daily task.

Thus passed a month, and by degrees the Egyptian workmen were withdrawn, yet the Hebrews were paid the regular wage.

When a year and four months had elapsed, not an Egyptian was to be seen making bricks and building; and the wage was stopped for the future, but the Hebrews were kept to their work.

The harshest and most cruel men were appointed to be their overseers, and if one of the Israelites asked for his wage, or fainted under his burden, he was beaten or put in the stocks.

When Pithom and Rameses were walled, the Israelites were employed to strengthen with forts all the other cities of Egypt, then to build storehouses and pyramids, to dig canals for the Nile, and to rear dykes against the overflow. They were also employed to dig and plough the fields, to garden and prune the fruit-trees, and to exercise trades. They were engaged from early dawn till late at night, and because the way from their homes was often far, they were forced to sleep in the open air, upon the bare ground.[1]

As the life of the Israelites became embittered to them, they called the king Meror, "the embitterer," instead of Melol, "the grinder," though that was appropriate enough, one would have supposed.[2]

But matters grew worse; the Edomites and Hittites again threatened Egypt, and Pharaoh ordered a closer guard to be kept, and heavier tasks to be laid upon the Hebrews.

Notwithstanding all attempts to crush the spirit of this unfortunate people and to diminish their numbers, they were sustained by hope in God, for a voice was heard from heaven, "This people shall increase abundantly, and multiply."

Whilst the men of Israel slept exhausted after their unspeakable oppression of mind and body, the faithful women laboured

[1] Yaschar, pp. 1248, 1249; 1253, 1254. [2] Ibid., p. 1255.

to relieve and strengthen them. They hastened to the springs to bring pure water to their husbands to drink, and, by the mercy of the All Merciful, it fell out that their pitchers were found, each time, to contain half water and half fish.

These gentle and diligent women dressed the fish, and prepared other good meats for their husbands, and they sought them at their work with the food, and with their cheerful words of encouragement. This loving attention of the women soothed the hearts of the men, and gave them fresh energy.

When 125 years had elapsed since Jacob came into Egypt, the fifty-fourth year after Joseph's death, the elders and councillors of Egypt presented themselves before Pharaoh, and complained to him that the people increased and multiplied and became very great in the land, so that they covered it like the bushes in the wood; and two of the king's councillors, of whom one was Job of Uz, said to Pharaoh, "It was well that heavy tasks were laid upon the Hebrews, but that doth not suffice; it is needful that they should be diminished in number as well as enslaved. Therefore give orders to the nurses to kill every male child that is born to the Hebrews, but to save the women children alive."

This counsel pleased the king well; and what Job had advised was put in operation.

Pharaoh summoned the two Hebrew midwives before him; they were mother and daughter; some say their names were Jochebed and Miriam, but others Jochebed and Elizabeth. Now, Miriam was only five years old, nevertheless she was of the greatest assistance to her mother in nursing women. Both showed the utmost kindness to the new-born children, washed and brushed them up, said pretty things to them, and strengthened the mothers with cordials and tonic draughts. To their care the Israelites were indebted for the graceful and vigorous forms of their children; and the two women were such favourites with the people, that they called the one Shiphrah (the soother or beautifier) and the other Puah (the helper).

When they appeared before the king, and heard what he designed, Miriam's young face flushed scarlet, and she said, in anger, "Woe to the man! God will punish him for his evil deed."

The executioner would have hurried her out, and killed her for her audacity, but the mother implored pardon, saying, "O king! forgive her speech; she is only a little foolish child."

Pharaoh consented, and assuming a gentler tone, explained that the female children were to be saved alive, and that the male children were to be quietly put to death, without the knowledge of the mothers. And he threatened them, if they did not obey his wishes, that he would cast them into a furnace of fire. Then he dismissed them. But the two midwives would not fulfil his desire.

And when Pharaoh found that the men-children were saved alive, he shut up the two midwives, that the Hebrew women might be without their succour. But this availed not. And God rewarded the midwives; for of the elder Moses was born.

Five years passed, and Pharaoh dreamed that, as he sat upon his throne, an old man stood before him holding a balance. And the old man put the princes, and nobles, and elders of Egypt, and all its inhabitants into one scale, and he put into the other a sucking child, and the babe outweighed all that was in the first scale.[1]

When Pharaoh awoke, he rehearsed his dream in the ears of his wise men and magicians and soothsayers, and asked them the interpretation thereof.

Then answered Balaam, who, with his sons Jannes and Jambres, was at the court, and said, "O king, live for ever! The dream thou didst see has this signification. A child shall be born among the Hebrews who shall bring them with a strong hand out of Egypt, and before whom all thy nations shall be as naught. A great danger threatens thee and all Egypt."

[1] Midrash, fol. 51; Yaschar, p. 1157.

Then said Pharaoh in dismay, "What shall we do? All that we have devised against this people has failed."

"Let the king suffer me to give my advice," said Jethro, one of his councillors. And when Pharaoh consented, he said, "May the king's days be multiplied! This is my advice; the people that thou oppressest is a great people, and God is their shield. All who resist them are brought to destruction; all who favour them prosper. Therefore, O king, do thou withdraw thy hand, which is heavy upon them; lighten their tasks, and extend to them thy favour."

But this advice pleased not Pharaoh nor his councillors; and his anger was kindled against Jethro, and he drove him from his court and from the country. Then Jethro went with his wife and daughter, and dwelt in the land of Midian.

Then said the king, "Job of Uz, give thy opinion."

But Job opened not his lips.

Then rose Balaam, son of Beor, and he said, "O my king, all thy attempts to hurt Israel have failed, and the people increase upon you. Think not to try fire against them, for that was tried against Abraham their father, and he was saved unhurt from the midst of the flames. Try not sword against them, for the knife was raised against Isaac their father, and he was delivered by the angel of God. Nor will hard labour injure them, as thou hast proved. Yet there remains water, that hath not yet been enlisted against them; prove them with water. Therefore my advice is—cast all their new-born sons into the river."[1]

The king hesitated not; he appointed Egyptian women to be nurses to the Hebrews, and instructed them to drown all the male children that were born; and he threatened with death those who withstood his decree. And that he might know what women were expecting to be delivered, he sent little Egyptian children to the baths, to observe the Hebrew women, and report on their appearance.

[1] Midrash Jalkut, fol. 52; Yaschar, pp. 1257-9.

But God looked upon the mothers, and they were delivered in sleep under the shadow of fruit-trees, and angels attended on them, washed and dressed the babes, and smeared their little hands with butter and honey, that they might lick them, and, delighting in the flavour, abstain from crying, and thus escape discovery. Then the mothers on waking exclaimed :— "O most Merciful One, into Thy hands we commit our children!" But the emissaries of Pharaoh followed the traces of the women, and would have slain the infants, had not the earth gaped, and received the little babes into a hollow place within, where they were fed by angel hands with butter and honey.

The Egyptians brought up oxen and ploughed over the spot, in hopes of destroying thereby the vanished infants; but, when their backs were turned, the children sprouted from the soil, like little flowers, and walked home unperceived. Some say that 10,000 children were cast into the Nile. They were not deserted by the Most High. The river rejected them upon its banks, and the rocks melted into butter and honey around them and thus fed them,[1] and oil distilled to anoint them.

This persecution had continued for three years and four months, when, on the seventh day of the twelfth month, Adar, the astrologers and seers stood before the king and said, "This day a child is born who will free the people of Israel! This, and one thing more, have we learnt from the stars, *Water* will be the cause of his death;[2] but whether he be an Egyptian or an Hebrew child, that we know not."

"Very well," said Pharaoh; "then in future all male children, Egyptians as well as Hebrews, shall be cast indiscriminately into the river."

And so was it done.[3]

[1] The curious passages, Isaiah vii. 15, 22, may allude to this tradition.

[2] Moses's life was shortened because he brought water out of the rock contrary to God's command (Numb. xxvii. 14), striking the rock instead of speaking to it.

[3] Beer, pp. 112-6.

2. THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF MOSES.

Kohath, son of Levi, had a son named Amram, whose life was so saintly, that death could not have touched him, had not the decree gone forth, that every child of Adam was to die.

He married Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, his aunt, and by her he had a daughter Miriam; and after four years she bore him a son, and he called his name Aaron.

Now when it was noised abroad that Pharaoh would slay all the sons of the Hebrews that were born to them, Amram thrust away his wife, and many others did the same, not that they hated their wives, but that they would spare them the grief of seeing their children put to death.[1] After three years, the spirit of prophecy came on Miriam, as she sat in the house, and she cried, "My parents shall have another son, who shall deliver Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians!" Then she said to her father, "What hast thou done? Thou hast sent thy wife away, out of thine house, because thou couldst not trust the Lord God, that He would protect the child that might be born to thee."

Amram, reproved by these words, sought his banished wife; the angel Gabriel guided him on his way, and a voice from heaven encouraged him to proceed. And when he found Jochebed, he led her to her home again.[2]

One hundred and thirty years old was Jochebed, but she was as fresh and beauteous as on the day she left her father's house.[3] She was with child, and Amram feared lest it should be a boy, and be slain by Pharaoh.

Then appeared the Eternal One to him in a dream, and

[1] Some authorities say that Jochebed, when thrust away, married Eliphazan, the son of Parnach (Numb. xxxiv. 25), and bare him two sons, Eldad and Medad (Numb. xi. 25); but others, with more probability, assert that she married Eliphazan after the death of Amram. (Yaschar, p. 1259.)

[2] Yaschar, p. 1260.

[3] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 446.

bade him be of good cheer, for He would protect the child, and make him great, so that all nations should hold him in honour.

When Amram awoke, he told his dream to Jochebed, and they were filled with fear and great amazement.

After six months she bore a son, without pain. The child entered this world in the third hour of the morning, of the seventh day of the month, Adar, in the year 2368 after the Creation, and the 130th year of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt. And when he was born, the house was filled with light, as of the brightest sunshine.

The tender mother's anxiety for her son was increased when she noted his beauty,—he was like an angel of God,—and his great height and noble appearance. The parents called him Tobias (God is good) to express their thankfulness, but others say he was called Jokutiel (Hope in God). Amram kissed his daughter, Miriam, on the brow, and said, "Now I know that thy prophecy is come true."[1]

Jochebed hid the child three months in her chamber where she slept. But Pharaoh, filled with anxiety, lest a child should have escaped him, sent Egyptian women with their nurslings to the houses of the Hebrews. Now it is the custom of children, when one cries, another cries also. Therefore the Egyptian women pricked their babes, when they went into a house, and if the child were concealed therein, it cried when it heard the Egyptian baby scream. Then it was brought out and despatched.

Jochebed knew that these women were coming to her house, and that, if the child were discovered, her husband and herself would be slain by the executioner of Pharaoh.

Moreover they feared the astrologers and soothsayers, that they would read in the heavens that a male child was concealed there. "Better can we deceive them," said Amram, "if we cast the child into the water."

Jochebed took the paper flags and wove a basket, and

[1] Rabboth, fol. 118a.

pitched it with pitch without, and clay within, that the smell of the pitch might not offend her dear little one; and then she placed the basket amongst the rushes, where the Red Sea at that time joined the river Nile.

Then, weeping and wailing, she went away, and seeing Miriam come to meet her, she smote her on the head, and said, "Now, daughter, where is thy prophesying?"

Miriam followed the little ark, as it floated on the wash of the river, and swam in and out among the reeds; for Miriam was wondering whether the prophecy would come true, or whether it would fail. This was on the twenty-first of the month Nisan, on the day, chosen from the beginning, on which in after times Moses should teach his people the Song of Praise for their delivery at the Red Sea.[1]

Then the angels surrounded the throne of God and cried, "O Lord of the whole earth, shall this mortal child foreordained to chant, at the head of Thy chosen people, the great song of delivery from water, perish this day by water?"

The Almighty answered, "Ye know well that I behold all things. They that seek their salvation in their own craftiness and evil ways shall find destruction, but they who trust in Me shall never be confounded. The history of that child shall be a witness to My almighty power."

Melol, king of Egypt, had then only one daughter, whom he greatly loved; Bithia (Thermutis or Therbutis)[2] was her name. She had been married for some time to Chenephras, prince of a territory near Memphis, but was childless. This troubled her greatly, for she desired a son who might succeed her father upon the throne of Egypt.

At this time God had sent upon Egypt an intolerable heat, and the people were affected with grievous boils.[3] To cure themselves, they bathed in the Nile. Bithia also suffered, and

[1] Exod. xv. 1.
[2] The Arabic name for her is Asia; Yaschar, p. 1261.
[3] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 446; Yaschar, p. 1261.

bathed, not in the river, but in baths in the palace; but on this day she went forth by the Nile bank, though otherwise she never left her father's palace. On reaching the bathing-place she observed the ark lodged among the bulrushes, and sent one of her maids to swim out and bring it to her; but the other servants said, "O princess, this is one of the Hebrew children, who are cast out according to the command of thy royal father. It beseems thee not to oppose his commands and frustrate his will."

Scarcely had the maidens uttered these words than they vanished from the surface of the earth. The angel Gabriel had sunk them all, with the exception of the one who swam for the ark, into the bosom of the earth.

But the eagerness of the princess was so great, that she could not wait till the damsel brought her the basket, and she stretched forth her arm towards it, and her arm was lengthened sixty ells, so that she was able to take hold of the ark and draw it to land, and lift the child out of the water.

No sooner had she touched the babe, than she was healed of the boils which afflicted her, and the splendour of the face of the child was like that of the sun.[1] She looked at it with wonder, and admired its beauty. But her father's stern law made her fear, and she thought to return the child to the water, when he began to cry, for the angel Gabriel had boxed his ears to make him weep, and thus excite the compassion of the princess. Then Miriam, hid away among the rushes, and little Aaron, aged three, hearing him cry, wept also.

The heart of the princess was stirred; and compassion, like that of a mother for her babe, filled her heart. She felt for the infant yearning love as though it were her own. "Truly," said Bithia, "the Hebrews are to be pitied, for it is no easy matter to part with a child, and to deliver it over to death."

Then, fearing that there would be no safety for the babe, if it were brought into the palace, she called to an Egyptian

[1] Midrash, fol. 51.

woman who was walking by the water, and bade her suckle the child. But the infant would not take the breast from this woman, nor from any other Egyptian woman that she summoned; and this the Almighty wrought that the child might be restored to its own mother again.

Then Miriam, the sister, mingled with those who came up, and said to Bithia, with sobs, "Noble lady! vain are all thine attempts to give the child the breast from one of a different race. If thou wouldst have a Hebrew woman, then let me fetch one, and the child will suck at once."[1]

This advice pleased Bithia, and she bade Miriam seek her out a Hebrew mother.

With winged steps Miriam hastened home, and brought her mother, Jochebed, to the princess. Then the babe readily took nourishment from her, and ceased crying.

Astonished at this wonder, the king's daughter said, but unawares, the truth, for she spake to Jochebed, "Here is thy child; take and nurse the child for me, and the wage shall be two pieces of silver a day."

Jochebed did what she was bidden, but better reward than all the silver in Pharaoh's house was the joy of having her son restored to his mother's breast.

The self-same day the soothsayers and star-gazers said to Pharaoh, "The child of whom we spake to thee, that he should free Israel, hath met his fate in the water."

Therefore the cruel decree ordering the destruction of all male infants was withdrawn, and the miraculous deliverance of Moses became by this means the salvation of the whole generation. In allusion to this, Moses said afterwards to the people when he would restrain them (Numbers xi.): "Verily ye number six hundred thousand men, and ye would all have perished in the river Nile, but I was delivered from the water, and therefore ye are all alive as at this day."

After two years Jochebed weaned him, and brought him to

[1] Midrash, fol. 51; Yaschar, p. 1262.

the king's daughter. Bithia, charmed with the beauty and intelligence of the child, took him into the palace, and named him Moses (he who is drawn out of the water). Lo! a voice from heaven fell, "Daughter of Pharaoh! because thou hast had compassion on this little child and hast called him thy son, therefore do I call thee My daughter (Bithia). The foundling that thou cherishest shall be called by the name thou gavest him—Moses; and by none other name shall he be known, wheresoever the fame of him spreads under the whole heaven."

Now, in order that Moses might really pass for the child of Bithia, the princess had feigned herself to be pregnant, and then to be confined; and now Pharaoh regarded him as his true grandchild.

On account of his exceeding beauty, every one that saw him was filled with admiration, and said, "Truly, this is a king's son." And when he was taken abroad, the people forsook their work, and deserted their shops, that they might see him. One day, when Moses was three years old, Bithia led him by the hand into the presence of Pharaoh, and the queen sat by the king, and all the princes of the realm stood about him. Then Bithia presented the child to the king, and said, "Oh, sire! this child of noble mien is not really my son; he was given to me in wondrous fashion by the divine river Nile; therefore have I brought him up as my own son, and destined him to succeed thee on thy throne, since no child of my body has been granted to me."

With these words Bithia laid the boy in the king's arms, and he pressed him to his heart, and kissed him. Then, to gratify his daughter, he took from his head the crown royal, and placed it upon the temples of Moses. But the child eagerly caught at the crown, and threw it on the ground, and then alighting from Pharaoh's knee, he in childish fashion danced round it, and finally trampled it under his feet.[1]

The king and his nobles were dismayed. They thought that

[1] Midrash, fol. 52; Yaschar, p. 1263.

this action augured evil to the king through the child that was before them. Then Balaam, the son of Beor, lifted up his voice and said, "My lord and king! dost thou not remember the interpretation of thy dream, as thy servant interpreted it to thee? This child is of Hebrew extraction, and is wiser and more cunning than befits his age. When he is old he will take thy crown from off thy head, and will tread the power of Egypt under his feet. Thus have his ancestors ever done. Abraham defied Nimrod, and rent from him Canaan, a portion of his kingdom. Isaac prevailed over the king of the Philistines. Jacob took from his brother his birthright and blessing, and smote the Hivites and their king Hamor. Joseph, the slave, became chief in this realm, and gave the best of this land to his father and his brethren. And now this child will take from thee the kingdom, and will enslave or destroy thy people. There is no expedient for thee but to slay him, that Egypt become not his prey."

But Pharaoh said, "We will take other counsel, Balaam, before we decide what shall be done with this child."

Then some advised that he should be burnt with fire, and others that he should be slain with the sword. But the angel Gabriel, in the form of an old man, mingled with the councillors, and said, "Let not innocent blood be shed. The child is too young to know what he is doing. Prove whether he has any understanding and design, before you sentence him. O king! let a bowl of live coals and a bowl of precious stones be brought to the little one. If he takes the stones, then he has understanding, and discerns between good and evil; but if he thrusts his hands towards the burning coals, then he is innocent of purpose and devoid of reason."[1]

This advice pleased the king, and he gave orders that it should be as the angel had recommended.

[1] According to another version, it was Jethro who advised that the child should be proved with the basins of rubies and coals. (Rabboth, fol. 118 b; Yaschar, pp. 1263, 1264.)

Now when the basins were brought in and offered to Moses, he thrust out his hand towards the jewels. But Gabriel, who had made himself invisible, caught his hand and directed it towards the red-hot coals; and Moses burnt his fingers, and he put them into his mouth, and burnt his lips and tongue; and therefore it is that Moses said, in after days, "I am slow of lips and slow of tongue."[1]

Pharaoh and his council were now convinced of the simplicity of Moses, and no harm was done him. Then Bithia removed him, and brought him up in her own part of the palace.

God was with him, and he increased in stature and beauty, and Pharaoh's heart was softened towards him. He went arrayed in purple through the streets, as the son of Bithia, and a chaplet of diamonds surrounded his brows, and he consorted only with princes. When he was five years old, he was in size and knowledge as advanced as a boy of twelve.

Masters were brought for him from all quarters, and he was instructed in all the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians; and the people looked upon him with hope as their future sovereign.[2]

3. THE YOUTH AND MARRIAGE OF MOSES.

Moses, as he grew older, distinguished himself from all other young men of Egypt by the conquest which he acquired over himself and his youthful passions and impetuous will. Although the life of a court offered him every kind of gratification, yet he did not allow himself to be attracted by its pleasures, or to regard as permanent what he knew to be fleeting. Thus it fell out, that all his friends and acquaintances wondered at him, and doubted whether he were not a god appeared on

[1] Exod. iv. 10.

[2] Beer, pp. 26–42. Abulfaraj says that Jannes and Jambres were the tutors of Moses in his youth (Hist. Dynast., p. 17).

earth. And, in truth, Moses did not live and act as did others. What he thought, that he said, and what he promised, that he fulfilled.

Moses had reached the summit of earthly greatness; acknowledged as grandson to Pharaoh, and heir to the crown. But he trusted not in the future which was thus offered to him, for he knew from Jochebed, whom he frequently visited, what was his true people, and who were his real parents. And the bond which attached him to his own house and people was in his heart, and could not be broken.

Moses went daily to Goshen to see his relations; and he observed how the Hebrews were oppressed, and groaned under their burdens. And he asked wherefore the yoke was pressed so heavily on the neck of these slaves. He was told of the advice of Balaam against the people, and of the way in which Pharaoh had sought the destruction of himself in his infancy. This information filled Moses with indignation, and alienated his affections from Pharaoh, and filled him with animosity towards Balaam.[1] But, as he was not in a position to rescue his brethren, or to punish Balaam, he cried, "Alas! I had rather die than continue to behold the affliction of my brethren." Then he took the necklace from off him, which indicated his princely position, and sought to ease the burden of the Israelites. He took the excessive loads from the women and old men, and laid them on the young and strong; and thus he seemed to be fulfilling Pharaoh's intentions in getting the work of building sooner executed, whereas, by making each labour according to his strength, their sufferings were lightened. And he said to the Hebrews, "Be of good cheer, relief is not so far off as you suppose—calm follows storm, blue sky succeeds black clouds, sunshine comes after rain. The whole world is full of change, and all is for an object."

Nevertheless Moses himself desponded; he looked with hatred upon Balaam, and lost all pleasure in the society of the

[1] Yaschar, p. 1265.

Egyptians. Balaam seeing that the young man was against him, and dreading his power, escaped with his sons Jannes and Jambres to the court of Ethiopia.

The young Moses, however, grew in favour with the king, who laid upon him the great office of introducing illustrious foreigners to the royal presence.

But Moses kept ever before his eyes the aim of his life, to relieve his people from their intolerable burdens. One day he presented himself before the king and said, "Sire! I have a petition to make of thee."

Pharaoh answered, "Say on, my son."

Then said Moses, "O king! every labourer is given one day in seven for rest, otherwise his work becomes languid and unprofitable. But the children of Israel are given no day of rest, but they work from the first day of the week to the last day, without cessation; therefore is their work inferior, and it is not executed with that heartiness which might be found, were they given one day in which to recruit their strength."

Pharaoh said, "Which day shall be given to them?"

Moses said, "Suffer them to rest on the seventh day."

The king consented, and the people were given the Sabbath, on which they ceased from their labours; therefore they rejoiced greatly, and for a thousand years the last day of the week was called "The gift of Moses."[1]

As the command to destroy all the male children had been withdrawn, the day that Moses was cast into the Nile, the people had multiplied greatly, and again the fears of the Egyptians were aroused. Therefore the king published a new decree, with the object of impeding the increase of the bondsmen.

He required the Egyptian task-masters to impose a tale of bricks on every man, and if at evening the tale of bricks was not made up, then, in place of the deficient bricks, even though only one brick was short, they were to take the children of

[1] Yaschar, p. 1265.

those who had not made up their tale, and to build them into the wall in place of bricks.[1] Thus upon one misery another was piled.

In order that this decree might be executed with greater certainty, ten labourers were placed under one Hebrew overseer, and one Egyptian task-master controlled the ten overseers. The duty of the Hebrew overseers was to wake the ten men they were set over, every morning before dawn, and bring them to their work. If the Egyptian task-masters observed that one of the labourers was not at his post, he went to the overseer, and bade him produce the man immediately.

Now one of these overseers had a wife of the tribe of Dan, whose name was Salome, daughter of Dibri. She was beautiful and faultless in her body. The Egyptian task-master had observed her frequently, and he loved her. Then, one day, he went early to the house of her husband, and bade him arise, and go and call the ten labourers. So the overseer rose, nothing doubting, and went forth, and then the Egyptian entered and concealed himself in the house. But the overseer, returning, found him, and drew him forth, and asked him with what intent he had hidden himself there; and Moses drew nigh. Now Moses was known to the Hebrews as merciful, and ready to judge righteously their causes; so the man ran to Moses, and told him that he had found the Egyptian task-master concealed in his house.

And Moses knew for what intent the man had done thus, and his anger was kindled, and he raised a spade to smite the man on the head and kill him.

But whilst the spade was yet in his hand, before it fell, Moses said within himself, "I am about to take a man's life; how know I that he will not repent? How know I that if I suffer him to live, he may beget children who will do righteously and serve the Lord? Is it well that I should slay this man?"

Then Moses's eyes were opened, and he saw the throne of

[1] Yaschar, p. 1263.

God, and the angels that surrounded it, and God said to him, "It is well that thou shouldst slay this Egyptian, and therefore have I called thee hither. Know that he would never repent, nor would his children do other than work evil, wert thou to give him his life."

So Moses called on the name of the Most High and smote; but before the spade touched the man, as the sound of the name of God reached his ears, he fell and died.[1]

Then Moses looked on the Hebrews who had crowded round, and he said to them, "God has declared that ye shall be as the sand of the sea shore. Now the sand falls and it is noiseless, and the foot of man presses it, and it sounds not. Therefore understand that ye are to be silent as is the sand of the sea shore, and tell not of what I have this day done."

Now when the man of the Hebrews returned home, he drove out his wife Salome, because he had found the Egyptian concealed in his house, and he gave her a writing of divorcement, and sent her away. Then the Hebrews talked among themselves at their work, and some said he had done well, and others that he had done ill. There were at their task two young men, brothers, Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, of the tribe of Reuben, and they strove together on this subject, and Dathan in anger lifted his hand, and would have smitten Abiram. Then Moses came up and stayed him, and cried, "What wickedness art thou doing, striking thy comrade? It beseems you not to lay hands on each other."

Boldly did Dathan answer: "Who made thee, beardless youth, a lord and ruler over us? We know well that thou art not the son of the king's daughter, but of Jochebed. *Wilt thou slay me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?*"

"Alas!" said Moses, "now I see that the evil words, and evil acts, and evil thoughts of this people will fight against them, and frustrate the loving-kindness of the Lord towards them."

[1] Parascha of R. Solomon Jaschi, on Exod. ii. 12; also Targums of Palestine and Jerusalem, i. p. 447; Yaschar, pp. 1265, 1266.

Then Dathan and Abiram went before Pharaoh, and told him that Moses had slain an Egyptian task-master; and Pharaoh's anger was kindled against Moses, and he cried, "Enough of evil hath been prophesied against thee, and I have not heeded it, and now thou liftest thy hand against my servants!"

For he had, for long, been slowly turning against Moses, when he saw that he walked not in the ways of the Egyptians, and that he loved the king's enemies, and hated the king's friends. Then he consulted his soothsayers and his councillors, and they gave him advice that he should put Moses to death with the sword. Therefore the young man, Moses, was brought forth, and he ascended the scaffold, and the executioner stood over him with his sword, the like of which was not in the whole world. And when the king gave the word, the headsman smote. But the Lord turned the neck of Moses into marble, and the sword bit not into it.

Instantly, before the second blow was dealt, the angel Michael took from the executioner his sword and his outward semblance, and gave to the headsman the semblance of Moses, and he smote at the executioner, and took his head from off his shoulders. But Moses fled away, and none observed him. And he went to the king of Ethiopia.[1]

Now the king of Ethiopia, Kikannos (Candacus) by name, was warring against his enemies; and when he left his capital city, Meroe, at the head of a mighty army, he left Balaam and his two sons regents during his absence.

Whilst the king was engaged in war, Balaam and his sons conspired against the king, and they bewitched the people with their enchantments, and led them from their allegiance, and persuaded them to submit to Balaam as their king. And Balaam strengthened the city on all sides. Sheba, or Meroe, was almost impregnable, as it was surrounded by the Nile and the Astopus. On two sides Balaam built walls, and on the third

[1] Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 40; Rabboth, fol. 119a; Yaschar, p. 1266.

side, between the Nile and the city, he dug countless canals, into which he let the water run. And on the fourth side he assembled innumerable serpents. Thus he made the city wholly impregnable.

When King Kikannos returned from the war, he saw that his capital was fortified, and he wondered; but when he was refused admission, he knew that there was treason.

One day he endeavoured to surmount the walls, but was repulsed with great slaughter; and the next day he threw thirty pontoons across the river, but when his soldiers reached the other side, they were engulfed in the canals, of which the water was impelled with foaming fury by great mill-wheels. On the third day he assaulted the town on the fourth side, but his men were bitten by the serpents and died. Then King Kikannos saw that the only hope of reducing the city was by famine; so he invested it, that no provisions might be brought into it.

Whilst he sat down before the capital, Moses took refuge in his camp, and was treated by him with great honour and distinction.

As the siege protracted itself through nine years, Kikannos fell ill and died.

Then the chief captains of his army assembled, and determined to elect a king, who might carry on the siege with energy, and reduce the city with speed, for they were weary of the long investment. So they elected Moses to be their king, and they threw off their garments and folded them, and made thereof a throne, and set Moses thereon, and blew their trumpets, and cried "God save King Moses!"[1]

And they gave him the widow of Kikannos to wife, and costly gifts of gold and silver and precious stones were brought to him, but all these he laid aside in the treasury. This took place 157 years after Jacob and his sons came down into Egypt, when Moses was aged twenty-seven years.

On the seventh day after his coronation came the captains

[1] This illustrates the passage 2 Kings iii. 13.

and officers before him, and besought of him counsel, how the city might be taken. Then said Moses, "Nine years have ye invested it, and it is not yet in your power. Follow my advice, and in nine days it shall be yours."

They said, "Speak, and we will obey."

Then Moses gave this advice, "Make it known in the camp that all the soldiers go into the woods, and bring me storks' nests as many as they can find."

So they obeyed, and young storks innumerable were brought to him. Then he said, "Keep them fasting till I give you word, and he who gives to a stork food, though it were but a crumb of bread, or a grain of corn, he shall be slain, and all that he hath shall become the king's property, and his house shall be made a dung-heap."

So the storks were kept fasting. And on the third day the king said, "Let the birds go."

Then the storks flew into the air, and they spied the serpents on the fourth side of the city, and they fell upon them, and the serpents fled, and they were killed and eaten by the storks or ever they reached their holes, and not a serpent remained. Then said Moses, "March into the city and take it."

And the army entered the city, and not one man fell of the king's army, but they slew all that opposed them.

Thus Moses had brought the Ethiopian army into possession of the capital. The grateful people placed the crown upon his head, and the queen of Kikannos gave him her hand with readiness. But Balaam and his sons escaped, riding upon a cloud.

Moses reigned in wisdom and righteousness for forty years, and the land prospered under his government, and all loved and honoured him. Nevertheless, some thought that the son of their late king ought to ascend the throne of his ancestors; —he was an infant when Moses was crowned, but now that he was a man, a party of the nobles desired to proclaim his right.

They prevailed upon the queen to speak; and when all the princes and great men of the kingdom were assembled, she declared the matter before all. "Men of Ethiopia," said she, "it is known to you that for forty years my husband has reigned in Sheba. Well do you know that he has ruled in equity, and administered righteous judgment. But know also, that his God is not our God, and that his faith is not our faith. My son, Mena-Cham (Minakros) is of fitting age to succeed his father; therefore it is my opinion that Moses should surrender to him the throne."

An assembly of the people was called, and as this advice of the queen pleased them, they besought Moses to resign the crown to the rightful heir. He consented, without hesitation, and, laden with gifts and good wishes, he left the country and went into Midian.[1]

Moses was sixty-seven years old when he entered Midian. Reuel or Jethro,[2] who had been a councillor of Pharaoh, had, as has been already related, taken up his residence in Midian, where the people had raised him to be High Priest and Prince over the whole tribe. But Jethro after a while withdrew from the priesthood, for he believed in the one True God, and abhorred the idols which the Midianites worshipped. And when the people found that Jethro despised their gods, and that he preached against their idolatry, they placed him under the ban, that none might give him meat or drink, or serve him.

This troubled Jethro greatly, for all his shepherds forsook him, as he was under the ban. Therefore it was, that his seven daughters were constrained to lead and water the flocks.[3]

Moses arrived near a well and sat down to rest. Then he saw the seven daughters of Jethro approach.

[1] Midrash, fol. 52; Yaschar, pp. 1265—1274.

[2] These were two of his seven names.

[3] It may be noticed in this as in several other instances, such as those of Rebekah and Rachel, the Rabbis have invented stories to explain the circumstance of the damsels watering the flock, which they supposed derogated from their dignity. This indicates the late date of these traditions, when the old pastoral simplicity was lost.

The maidens had gone early to the well, for they feared lest the shepherds, taking advantage of their being placed under ban, should molest them, and refuse to give their sheep water. They let down their pitchers in turn, and with much trouble filled the trough. Then the shepherds came up and drove them away, and led their sheep to the trough the maidens had filled, and in rude jest they would have thrown the damsels into the water, but Moses stood up and delivered them, and rebuked the shepherds, and they were ashamed.

Then Moses let down his pitcher, and the water leaped up and overflowed, and he filled the trough and gave the flocks of the seven maidens to drink, and then he watered also the flocks of the shepherds, lest there should be evil blood between them.

Now when the maidens came home, they related to their father all that had taken place; and he said, "Where is the man that hath shown kindness to you?—bring him to me."

So Zipporah ran—she ran like a bird—and came to the well, and bade Moses enter under their roof and eat of their table.

When Moses came to Raguel (Jethro), the old man asked him whence he came, and Moses told him all the truth.

Then thought Jethro, "I am fallen under the displeasure of Midian, and this man has been driven out of Egypt and out of Ethiopia; he must be a dangerous man; he will embroil me with the men of this land, and, if the king of Ethiopia or Pharaoh of Egypt hears that I have harboured him, it will go ill with me."

Therefore Raguel took Moses and bound him with chains, and threw him into a dungeon, where he was given only scanty food; and soon Jethro, whose thoughts were turned to reconciliation with the Midianites, forgot him, and sent him no food. But Zipporah loved him, and was grateful to him for the kindness he had showed her, in saving her from the hands of the shepherds who would have dipped her in the watering-trough, and every day she took him food and drink

and in return was instructed by the prisoner in the law of the Most High.[1]

Thus passed seven, or, as others say, ten years;[2] and all the while the gentle and loving Zipporah ministered to his necessities.

The Midianites were reconciled again with Jethro, and restored him to his former position; and his scruples about the worship of idols abated, when he found that opposition to the established religion interfered with his temporal interests.

Then, when all was again prosperous, many great men and princes came to ask the hand of Zipporah his daughter, who was beautiful as the morning star, and as the dove in the hole of the rock, and as the narcissus by the water's side. But Zipporah loved Moses alone; and Jethro, unwilling to offend those who solicited her by refusing them, as he could give his daughter to one only, took his staff, whereon was written the name of God, the staff which was cut from the Tree of Life, and which had belonged to Joseph, but which he had taken with him from the palace of Pharaoh, and he planted it in his garden, and said, "He who can pluck up this staff, he shall take my daughter Zipporah."

Then the strong chiefs of Edom and of Midian came and tried, but they could not move the staff.

One day Zipporah went before her father, and reminded him of the man whom he had cast into a dungeon so many years before. Jethro was amazed, and he said, "I had forgotten him these seven years; he must be dead; he has had no food."

But Zipporah said meekly, "With God all things are possible."

So Jethro went to the prison door and opened it, and Moses was alive. Then he brought him forth, and cut his hair, and pared his nails, and gave him a change of raiment, and set him in his garden, and placed meat before him.

[1] Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 40; Yaschar, p. 1274.
[2] The Targum of Palestine, "ten years;" i. p. 448.

Now Moses, being once more in the fresh air, and under the blue sky, and with the light of heaven shining upon him, prayed and gave thanks to God; and seeing the staff, whereon was written the name of the Most High, he went to it and took it away, and it followed his hand.

When Jethro returned into the garden, lo! Moses had the staff of the Tree of Life in his hand; then Jethro cried out, "This is a man called of God to be a prince and a great man among the Hebrews, and to be famous throughout the world." And he gave him Zipporah, his daughter, to be his wife.[1]

One day, as Moses was tending his flock in a barren place, he saw that one of the lambs had left the flock and was escaping. The good shepherd pursued it, but the lamb ran so much the faster, fled through valley and over hill, till it reached a mountain stream; then it halted and drank.

Moses now came up to it, and looked at it with troubled countenance, and said,—

"My dear little friend! Then it was thirst which made thee run so far and seem to fly from me; and I knew it not! Poor little creature, how tired thou must be! How canst thou return so far to the flock?"

And when the lamb heard this, it suffered Moses to take it up and lay it upon his shoulders; and, carrying the lamb, he returned to the flock.

Now whilst Moses walked, burdened with the lamb, there fell a voice from heaven, "Thou, who hast shown so great love, so great patience towards the sheep of man's fold, thou art worthy to be called to pasture the sheep of the fold of God."[2]

[1] Beer, pp. 42–62; Pirke R. Eliezer. The Targum of Palestine says the rod was in the chamber of Jethro, not in the garden; i. p. 448. Yaschar, pp. 1277, 1278.

[2] Rabbot., fol. 120 a. It is possible that our Blessed Lord's parable of the Good Shepherd may contain an allusion to this popular and beautiful tradition.

4. MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH.

One day that Moses was keeping sheep, his father-in-law, Jethro, came to him and demanded back the staff that he had given him. Then Moses cast the staff from him among a number of other rods, but the staff ever returned to his hand as often as he cast it away. Then Jethro laid hold of the rod, but he could not move it. Therefore he was obliged to let Moses retain it. But he was estranged from him.

Now Pharaoh was dead. And when the news reached Moses in Midian, he gat him up, and set his wife Zipporah and his son Gershom on an ass, and took the way of Egypt.

And as they were in the way, they halted in a certain place; and it was cloudy, and cold, and rainy. Then they encamped, and Zipporah tried to make a fire, but could not, for the wood was damp.

Moses said, "I see a fire burning at the foot of the mountain. I will go to it, for there must be travellers there; and I will fetch a brand away and will kindle a fire, and be warm."

Then he took his rod in his hand and went. But when he came near the spot, he saw that the fire was not on the ground, but at the summit of a tree; and the tree was a thorn. A thorn-tree was the first tree that grew, when God created the herb of the field and the trees of the forest. Moses was filled with fear, and he would have turned and fled, but a voice[1] called to him out of the fire, "*Moses, Moses!*" And he said, "*Here am I.*" And the voice said again, "*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*" This was the reason why he was bidden put off his shoes; they were made of asses' hide, and Moses had trodden on the dung of his ass as he followed Zipporah and Gershom.

[1] Gen. iii. 4. It was the angel Zagnugael who appeared and spoke to him from the bush. (Targum of Palestine, i. p. 449; Abulfeda, p. 31.)

Then God gave Moses his commission to go into Egypt, and release His captive people. But Moses feared, and said, "I am of slow lips and tongue!" for he had burnt them, with his finger, when he took the live coal before Pharaoh, as already related. But God said to him, "I have given thee Aaron thy brother to speak for thee. And now, what is this that thou hast in thy hand?"

Moses answered, "This is my rod."

"And to what purpose dost thou turn it?"

"I lean on it when I am walking, and when I come where there is no grass, I strike the trees therewith, and bring down the leaves to feed my sheep withal." And when he had narrated all the uses to which he put the staff, God said to him, "With this staff shalt thou prevail against Pharaoh. Cast it upon the ground." And when he cast it down, it was transformed into a serpent or dragon, and Moses turned his back to run from it; but God said, "Fear not; take it up by the neck;" and he caught it, and it became a rod in his hands. Then said the Most Holy, "Put thy hand into thy bosom." And he did so, and drew it forth, and it was white, and shining like the moon in the dark of night.

Then Moses desired to go back to Zipporah his wife, but the angel Gabriel retained him, saying, "Thou hast higher duties to perform than to attend on thy wife. Lo! I have already reconducted her to her father's house. Go on upon thy way to Pharaoh, as the Lord hath commanded thee."

The night on which Moses entered Egyptian territory, an angel appeared to Aaron in a dream, with a crystal glass full of good wine in his hand, and said, as he extended it to him:—

"Aaron, drink of this wine which the Lord sends thee as a pledge of good news. Thy brother Moses has returned to Egypt, and God has chosen him to be His prophet, and thee to be his spokesman. Arise, and go forth to meet him!"

Aaron therefore arose from his bed and went out of the city

to the banks of the Nile, but there was no boat there by which he could cross. Suddenly he perceived in the distance a light which approached; and as it drew nearer he saw that it was a horseman. It was Gabriel mounted on a steed of fire, which shone like the brightest diamond, and whose neighing was hymns of praise, for the steed was one of the cherubim.

Aaron at first supposed that he was pursued by one of Pharaoh's horsemen, and he would have cast himself into the Nile; but Gabriel stayed him, declared who he was, mounted him on the fiery cherub, and they crossed the Nile on his back.

There stood Moses, who, when he saw Aaron, exclaimed, "Truth is come, Falsehood is passed." Now this was the sign that God had given to Moses, "*Behold he cometh to meet thee.*" [1] And they rejoiced over each other.

But another account is this: Moses entered Memphis with his sheep, during the night. Now Amram was dead, but his wife Jochebed was alive. When Moses reached the door, Jochebed was awake. He knocked at the door; then she opened, but knew him not, and asked, "Who art thou?"

He answered, "I am a man from a far country; I pray thee lodge me, and give me to eat this night."

She took him in, and brought him some meat, and said to Aaron, "Sit down and eat with the guest, to do him honour." Aaron, in eating, conversed with Moses and recognized him.

Then the mother and sister knew him also. And when the meal was over, Moses acquitted himself of his mission to Aaron, and Aaron answered, "I will obey the will of God." [2]

Moses spent the night, and the whole of the following day, in relating to his mother the things that had befallen him.

And on the second night, Moses and Aaron went forth to Pharaoh's palace. Now the palace had four hundred doors, a hundred on each side, and each door was guarded by sixty

[1] Exod. iv. 14. [2] Tabari, i. c. lxxiii. p. 24.

thousand fighting men. The angel Gabriel came to them and led them into the palace, but not by the doors.

When they appeared before Pharaoh, they said: "God hath sent us unto thee to bid thee let the Hebrews go, that they may hold a feast in the wilderness."

But Pharaoh said, "*Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*"[1]

Tabari tells a different story. Moses and Aaron sought admittance during two years. Now Pharaoh gave himself out to be a god.

But Moses and Aaron, when they spake at the door with the porters, said, "He is no god." One day the jester of Pharaoh heard his master read the history of his own life, and when he came to the passage which asserted he was a god, the jester exclaimed, "Now this is strange! For two years there have been two strangers at thy gate denying thy divinity."

When Pharaoh heard this, he was in a fury, and he sent and had Moses and Aaron brought before him.

But to return to the Rabbinic tale. Moses and Aaron were driven out from the presence of Pharaoh; and he said, "Who admitted these men?" And some of the porters he slew, and some he scourged.

Then two lionesses were placed before the palace, to protect it, and the beasts suffered no man to enter unless Pharaoh gave the word.

And the Lord spake to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When Pharaoh talketh with you, saying, Give us a miracle, thou shalt say to Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it down, and it shall became a basilisk serpent; for all the inhabitants of the earth shall hear the voice of the shriek of Egypt when I destroy it, as all creatures heard the shriek of the serpent when I stripped it, and took from it its legs and made it lick the dust after the Fall."[2]

[1] Midrash, fol. 54.

[2] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 460.

On the morrow, Moses and Aaron came again to the king's palace, and the lionesses would have devoured them. Then Moses raised his staff, and their chains brake, and they followed him, barking like dogs, into the house.[1]

When Moses and Aaron stood before the king, Aaron cast down the rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent, which opened its jaws, and it laid one jaw beneath the throne, and its upper jaw was over the canopy above it; then the servants fled from before it, and Pharaoh hid himself beneath his throne, and the fear it caused him gave him bowel-complaint for a week. Now before this Pharaoh was only moved once a week, and this was the occasion of his being lifted up with pride, and giving himself out to be a god.[2]

Pharaoh cried out from under the throne, "O Moses, take hold of the serpent, and I will do what you desire."[3]

Moses took hold of the serpent, and it became a rod in his hands. Then Pharaoh crawled out from under his throne, and sat down upon it. And Moses put his hand into his bosom, and when he drew it forth, it shone like the moon.

The king sent for his magicians, and the chief of these were Jannes and Jambres. He told them what Moses had done.

They said, "We can turn a thousand rods into serpents."

Then the king named a day when Moses and Aaron on one side should strive with Jannes and Jambres[4] and all the magicians on the other; and he gave them a month to prepare for the contest.

On the day appointed—it was Pharaoh's birthday—all the inhabitants of Memphis were assembled in a great plain outside the city, where lists were staked out, and the royal tent was spread for the king to view the contest.

[1] Yaschar, p. 1280. [2] Tabari, p. 326.

[3] Some say that Pharaoh entreated Moses to spare him for the sake of Asia (Bithia), and that at the mention of his name Moses was softened. (Weil, p. 159.)

[4] In Arabic, Risam and Rijam; and Shabun and Gabun, in Persian.

Moses and Aaron stood on one side and the magicians on the other.

The latter said, "Shall we cast our rods, or will you?"

Moses answered, "Do you cast your rods first."

Then the magicians threw down a hundred ass-loads of rods, tied the rods together with cords, and by their enchantment caused them to appear to the spectators like serpents, leaping and darting from one side of the arena to the other.

And all the people were filled with fear, and the magicians said, "We have this day triumphed over Moses."

Then the prophet of God cast his rod before Pharaoh, and it became a mighty serpent. It rolled its tail round the throne of the king, and it shot forth its head, and swallowed all the rods of the enchanters, so that there remained not one.

After that all had disappeared, Moses took the serpent, and it became a rod in his hand again, but all the rods of the magicians had vanished.

And when the magicians saw the miracle that Moses had wrought, they were converted, and worshipped the true God. But Pharaoh cut off their hands and feet, and crucified them; and they died. Pharaoh's own daughter Maschita believed; and the king in his rage did not spare her, but cast her into a fire, and she was burnt. Bithia was also denounced to him, and she was condemned to the flames, but the angel Gabriel delivered her. The Mussulmans say that he consoled her by telling her that she would become the wife of Mohammed in Paradise, after which he gave her to drink, and when she had tasted, she died without pain.

Then Moses and Aaron met Pharaoh in the morning as he went by the side of the river, and Moses said to the king, "*The Lord of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness.*"

But Pharaoh would not hearken to him. Then Aaron stretched out his rod over the river, and it became blood.

All the water that was in the vessels also became blood, even

the spittle that was in the mouth of the Egyptians. The Rabbi Levi said that by this means the Israelites realized large fortunes; for if an Israelite and an Egyptian went together to the Nile to fetch water, the vessel of the Egyptian was found to contain blood, but that of the Israelite pure water; but if an Israelite brought water to the house of an Egyptian and sold it, it remained water.[1]

But Pharaoh's heart was hard; and seven days passed, after that the Lord had smitten the river.

Then went Moses and Aaron to him. But the four hundred doors of the palace were guarded by bears, lions, and other savage beasts, so that none might pass, till they were satisfied with flesh. But Moses and Aaron came up, collected them together, drew a circle round them with the sacred staff, and the wild beasts licked the feet of the prophets and followed them into the presence of Pharaoh.[2]

Moses and Aaron repeated their message to Pharaoh, but he would not hearken to them, but drove them from his presence. Aaron smote the river; but Moses on no occasion smote the Nile, for he respected the river which had saved his life as a babe.[3] Then the Lord brought frogs upon the land, and filled all the houses; they were in the beds, on the tables, in the cups. And the king sent for Moses and said: "*Intreat the Lord, that He may take the frogs from me and from my people.*" So the Lord sent a great rain, and it washed the frogs into the Red Sea.

The next plague was lice.[4]

The fourth plague was wild beasts.

The fifth was murrain.

The sixth was boils and blains upon man and beast.[5]

[1] Midrash, fol. 56. The Targums say that the enchanters turned the water of Goshen into blood, so that there was no water to the Israelites as to the Egyptians; i. p. 462.

[2] Midrash, fol. 55. [3] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 463.

[4] Venomous insects (Kalma), gnats (Kinnim). See Wisdom xvi. 1, 3.

[5] Targums, i. 464.

The seventh was hail and tempest. Now Job regarded the word of Moses, and he brought his cattle within doors, and they were saved; but Balaam regarded it not, and all his cattle were destroyed.[1]

The eighth was locusts; these the Egyptians fried, and laid by in store to serve them for food; but when the west wind came to blow the locusts away, it blew away also those that had been pickled and laid by for future consumption.[2]

The ninth plague was darkness.

The tenth was the death of the first-born.

The Book of Jasher says that, the Egyptains having closed their doors and windows against the plagues of flies, and locusts, and lice, God sent the sea-monster Silinoth, a huge polypus with arms ten cubits long, and the beast climbed upon the roofs and broke them up, and let down its slimy arms, and unlatched all the doors and windows, and threw them open for the flies and locusts and lice to enter.[3]

But the Mohammedans give a different order to the signs:—(1) the rod changed into a serpent; (2) the whitened hand; (3) the famine; (4) a deluge, the Nile rose over the land so that every man stood in water up to his neck; (5) locusts; (6) anommals,—these are two-legged animals smaller than locusts; (7) blood; (8) frogs; (9) every green thing throughout the land, all fruit, all grain, eggs, and everything in the houses were turned to stone.[4]

After the plague of the darkness, Pharaoh resolved on a general massacre of all the children of the Hebrews. The Mussulmans put the temporary petrifaction of all in the land in the place of the darkness. The Book of Exodus says that during the darkness "*they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place;*" but the Arabs say that they were turned to stone. Here might be seen a petrified man with a balance in his hand

[1] Targums, i. p. 467.
[2] Ibid., i. p. 471.
[3] Yaschar, p. 1283.
[4] Tabari, i. p. 338.

sitting in the bazaar; there, another stone man counting out money; and the porters at the palace were congealed to marble with their swords in their hands.[1] But others say that this was a separate plague, and that the darkness followed it.

And now Gabriel took on him the form of a servant of the king, and he went before him and asked him what was his desire.

"That vile liar Moses deserves death," said Pharaoh.

"How shall I slay him?" asked Gabriel.

"Let him be cast into the water."

"Give me a written order," said the angel. Pharaoh did so.

Then Gabriel went to Moses and told him that the time was come when he was to leave Egypt with all the people, for the measure of the iniquity of Pharaoh was filled up, and the Lord would destroy him with a signal overthrow.

5. THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

The Israelites had made their preparations to depart out of Egypt a month before the call came to escape.

And when all was ready, Moses called together the elders of the people and said to them, "When Joseph died, he ordered his descendants to take up his bones, or ever they went out of the land, and to bear them to the cave of Machpelah, where lie the bones of his father Jacob. Where are the bones of Joseph?"

The elders answered him, "We do not know."

Now there was an old Egyptian woman, named Miriam, and she believed in the Lord. She said to Moses, "I will show thee where is the tomb of Joseph, if thou wilt swear unto me that thou wilt take me with thee from Egypt, and that thou wilt ask the Most High to admit me into Paradise."

Moses said, "I will do these things that thou askest."

Then the woman said, "The tomb of Joseph is in the

[1] Weil, p. 165.

middle of the river Nile, which flows through Memphis, at such a spot."

Moses prayed to God, and the water fell till the bed of the river was left dry; and then he and the woman went into it, and came on the tomb of Joseph; it was a sarcophagus of marble without joints.[1]

Moses made preparations for departure, and said to the children of Israel, "God will destroy the Egyptians, and will give you their precious things."

Then every one among the Hebrews who had an Egyptian neighbour said to him, if he was rich: "I am going to a feast in the country, I pray thee lend me jewels of gold and silver to adorn my wife and children."

The Egyptians lent their precious things, and the Israelites by this means found themselves possessed of borrowed jewels in great abundance. Then Moses said, "We will leave Egypt this night when the Egyptians are asleep. Let every house-keeper softly desert his house, and bring with him his precious things, and meet outside the town. And let every one slay a lamb, and sprinkle with the blood the lintel and door-posts of the house, that the neighbours may know, when they see the blood, that the house is empty."

When the middle of the night was passed, the Israelites were assembled outside Memphis, at the place which Moses had appointed. Then the host was numbered, and it contained six hundred thousand horsemen, not including those who were on foot, the women, the children, and the aged. All who were under twenty were accounted infants, and all who were over sixty were accounted aged.

After that, Moses placed Aaron in command of the first battalion, and he said to him, "March in the direction of the sea, for Gabriel has promised to meet me on its shores." At that time one branch of the Nile (the Pelusiac branch) flowed

[1] Talmud, Sota, fol. 13.

into the Red Sea, which extended over where is now sandy desert to Migdol.

Moses made the host follow Aaron, troop by troop, and tribe by tribe; and he brought up the rear with a strong guard of picked men.

It was dawning towards the first day of the week when Israel escaped out of Egypt.

And when day broke, behold, they were gone away. Then the Egyptians came and told Pharaoh. He sent to search all the houses of the Israelites, but they were all empty, only their lamps were left burning. Pharaoh said, "We will pursue them." The Egyptians said, "They have borrowed our jewels; we must follow after them, and recover what is our own."

Now Moses had used craft touching these ornaments, in order that the Egyptians might be constrained to follow. For if the Israelites had gone without these, the Egyptians would have rejoiced at their departure. But because they had borrowed of the Egyptians, therefore the Egyptians went after them to recover their ornaments, and by this means rushed into destruction.

And Israel marched all day through the wilderness protected by seven clouds of glory on their four sides: one above them, that neither hail nor rain might fall upon them, nor that they should be burned by the heat of the sun; one beneath them, that they might not be hurt by thorns, serpents, or scorpions; and one went before them, to make the valleys even, and the mountains low, and to prepare them a place of habitation.[1]

Also, when the morning dawned, there was not a house in all Egypt in which there was not a first-born dead. And this delayed the people from pursuing after the Israelites; for they were engaged in bewailing their dead, and in digging graves for

[1] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 478.

them. Thus they were not at leisure to follow after their former slaves, till they had escaped clean away.

Also that night was every metal image in Egypt molten, and every idol of stone was broken, and every idol of clay was shattered, and every idol of wood was dissolved to dust.[1]

The same day Pharaoh sent into all the cities of Egypt and collected an army. When even was come the whole army was assembled about the king, and Pharaoh said to Dathan and Abiram, who had remained behind,[2] "The Israelites are few in number, *they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.*" For all the way was full of marshes and canals of water and desert tracts. "They have acted wrongly by us, for they have carried away the ornaments and jewels of our people; and Moses, by magic, has slain all our first-born, so that there is not a house in which there is not one dead."

On the morrow—it was the second day of the week—the army was reviewed, and Pharaoh numbered the host, and he had six hundred chosen chariots, and two million foot soldiers, and five million horsemen, and, in addition, there were one million seven hundred thousand horses, and on these horses were black men.

When the sun rose on the third day, Pharaoh marched out of Memphis, and he pursued for half a day with forced marches. At noon, Pharaoh had come up with Moses, and the fore-front of Pharaoh's army thrust the rear-guard of the army of Moses. Then the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, and they said to Moses, "*Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?*"

They were divided into four opinions. One set said, "Let us fling ourselves into the sea." Another set said, "Let us return and surrender ourselves." The third set said, "Let us array battle against the Egyptians." The fourth recommended,

[1] Targums, i. p. 475. [2] Ibid., i. p. 485.

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"Let us shout against them, and frighten them away with our clamour."[1]

And Moses said unto the people, "*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*"[2]

Then Moses raised his rod over the sea, and it divided, and let twelve channels of dry land appear traversing it, one for each of the twelve tribes. "When Moses had smitten," says the Koran, "the sea divided into twelve heaps, and left twelve ways through it, and each heap was as a great mountain."[3]

The Israelites hesitated to enter; for they said, "O Moses! the bottom of this sea is black mud, and when we place our feet on it we shall sink in and be swallowed up."

But Moses prayed to God, and He sent a wind and the rays of the sun, and the wind and the sun dried the mud, and it became as sand.

Then Gabriel and Michael appeared to Moses, and said, "Pass on, and lead the people through. As for us, we have orders to tarry for Pharaoh." So Moses galloped forward into the sea, crying, "In the name of the merciful and glorious God!" and all the people went in after him. But as they marched by twelve ways, and there were walls of water between, they could not see each other, and they were in fear; therefore Moses prayed to the Lord, and the Lord made the water-heaps rise and arch over them like bowers, and shelter them from the fire of the sun; and He made the watery walls so clear they were as sheets of glass, and through them the columns of the advancing army were visible to each other.

Moses traversed the sea in two hours, and he came forth with all the people on the other side.

Then Pharaoh and his host came to the water's side, but he feared to enter in. Now Pharaoh was mounted on an entire horse of great beauty. He reined in his steed and would not

[1] Targum of Jerusalem, i. p. 488; Yaschar, p. 1287.
[2] Exod. xiv. 13, 14.
[3] Koran, Sura xxvi. v. 63.

go forward, for he thought that this was part of the enchantment of Moses.

But now Gabriel appeared mounted on a mare, and this was the cherub Ramka.[1] And when the horse of Pharaoh saw the mare of Gabriel, he plunged forward and followed the mare into the sea. Then, when the Egyptian army saw their king enter fearlessly into one of the channels, they also precipitated themselves into the ways through the deep.

They advanced till they reached the middle of the Red Sea, and then Gabriel reined in and turned and unfurled before Pharaoh the order he had given for the destruction of Moses in the water, and it was signed by Pharaoh and sealed with his own signet.

"See!" exclaimed the angel. "What thou wouldest do to Moses, that shall be done to thee; for thou art but a man, thou who fightest against God."

Then the twelve heaps of water overwhelmed the host. But Pharaoh's horse was so fleet of foot that he outfled the returning waters, and he brought the king to the shore. He would have been saved, had not Gabriel smitten him on the face, and he fell back into the sea and perished with the rest. Then said Miriam, as he sank, "*Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.*"[2]

Another curious incident is related by Tabari. When the water reached Pharaoh, and he knew that he must perish, he cried out, "I believe in the God of Israel!" Gabriel, fearing lest Pharaoh should repeat these words, and that God in His mercy should accept his profession of faith, and pardon him, passed his wing over the bottom of the sea, raised the earth, and threw it into the mouth of Pharaoh so as to prevent him from swallowing again, and said, "Now thou believest, but before thou wast rebellious; nevertheless, thou art numbered with the wicked."[3]

[1] Weil, p. 168; see also Midrash, fol. 176.
[2] Exod. xv. 21.
[3] Tabari, p. 350.

It was the ninth hour of the day when the children of Israel stood on dry land on the further side of the sea.

On the morrow, the children of Israel assembled around Moses, and said to him, "We do not believe that Pharaoh is drowned, for he had peculiar power. He never suffered from headache, nor from fever, nor from any sickness, and was internally moved but once a week."

Then Moses clave the sea asunder with his rod, and they saw Pharaoh and all his host dead at the bottom of the sea. The bodies of the Egyptians were covered with armour and much gold and silver, and on the corpse of Pharaoh were chains and bracelets of gold. The children of Israel would have spoiled the dead, but Moses forbade them, for he said, "It is lawful to spoil the living, but it is robbery to strip the dead." Nevertheless many of the Hebrews went in and took from the Egyptians all that was valuable. Then God was wroth, because they had disobeyed Moses, and the sea was troubled, and for ten days it raged with fury, and even to this day the water is not at rest where the Israelites committed this sin. And the name of that place at this day is Bab el Taquath."[1]

6. THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

As long as Moses was with them, the Israelites did not venture to make idols, but when God summoned Moses into the Mount to talk with Him face to face, then they spake to Aaron that he should make a molten god to go before them.

Aaron bade them break off their earrings and bracelets and give them to him, for he thought that they would be reluctant to part with their jewels. Nevertheless the people brought their ornaments to him in great abundance, and one named Micah cast them into a copper vessel; and when the gold was melted, he threw in a handful of the sand which had been under the hoof of Gabriel's horse, and there came forth a calf,

[1] Tabari, i. p. 355.

which ran about like a living beast, and bellowed; for Sammael (Satan) had entered into it. "Here is your god that shall go before you," cried Micah; and all the people fell down and worshipped the golden calf.[1]

And when Moses came down from the Mount and drew near to the camp, and saw the calf, and the instruments of music in the hands of the wicked, who were dancing and bowing before it, and Satan among them dancing and leaping before the people, the wrath of Moses was suddenly kindled, and he cast the tables of the Commandments, which he had received from God in the Mount, out of his hand and brake them at the foot of the mountain; but the holy writing that was on them flew, and was carried away into the heavens; and he cried, and said, "Woe upon the people who have heard from the mouth of the Holy One, 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any image, a figure, or any likeness;' and yet at the end of forty days make a useless molten calf!"

And he took the calf which they had made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it to powder, and cast it upon the face of the water of the stream, and made the sons of Israel drink; and whoever had given thereto any trinket of gold, the sign of it came forth upon his nostrils.[2]

Of all the children of Israel only twelve thousand were found who had not worshipped the calf.[3]

The Mussulmans say that the Tables borne by Moses were from ten to twelve cubits in length, and were made, say some, of cedar wood, but others say of ruby, others of carbuncle; but the general opinion is that they were of sapphire or emerald;[4] and the letters were graven within them, not on the surface, so that the words could be read on either side. When the golden calf had been pounded to dust, Moses made the

[1] Both the Rabbis and the Mussulmans lay the blame, not on Aaron, but on another. The Rabbis say it was Micah who made the calf; the Mussulmans call him Samiri. (Weil, p. 170.)

[2] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 552.

[3] Tabari, i. p. 362.

[4] Targum of Palestine, ii. p. 685.

Israelites drink water in which was the dust, and those who had kissed the idol were marked with gilt lips. Thus the Levites were able to distinguish them; and they slew of them twenty and three thousand.[1]

It is a common tradition among the Jews that the red hair which is by no means infrequently met with in the Hebrew race is derived from this period; all those who had sinned and drank of the water lost their black hair and it became red, and they transmitted the colour to their posterity.

Another version of the story is as follows. Samiri (Micah), who had fashioned the golden calf, was of the tribe of Levi. When Moses came down from the Mount, he would have beaten Aaron, but his brother said, "It is not I, it is Samiri who made the calf." Then Moses would have slain Samiri, but God forbade him, and ordered him instead to place him under ban.

From that time till now, the man wanders, like a wild beast, from one end of the earth to the other; every man avoids him, and cleanses the earth on which his feet have rested; and when he comes near any man, he cries out, "Touch me not!"

But before Moses drave Samiri out of the camp, he ground the calf to powder, and made Samiri pollute it; then he mixed it with the water, and gave it to the Israelites to drink. After Samiri had departed, Moses interceded with God for the people. But God answered, "I cannot pardon them, for their sin is yet in them, and it will only be purged out by the draught they have drunk."

When Moses returned to the camp, he heard a piteous cry. Many Israelites with yellow faces and livid bodies cast themselves before him, and cried, "Help! Moses, help! the golden calf consumes our intestines; we will repent and die, if the Lord will pardon us."

Some, really contrite, were healed. Then a black cloud came down on the camp, and all those who were in it fought with

[1] Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 45.

one another and slew one another; but upon the innocent the swords had no power. Seven thousand idolaters had been slain, when Moses, hearing the cry of the women and children, came and prayed; and the cloud vanished, and the sword rested.[1]

According to some, the complaint caused by swallowing the dust of the calf was jaundice, a complaint which has never ceased from among men since that day. Thus the calf brought two novelties into the world, red hair and jaundice.

And Moses went up again into the Mount, and took with him seventy of the elders. And he besought the Lord, "Suffer me, O Lord, to see Thee!"[2] But the Lord answered him, "Thinkest thou that thou canst behold Me and live?" And He said, "Look at this mountain; I will display Myself to this mountain."

Then the mountain saw God, and it dissolved into fine dust. So Moses knew that it was not for him to see God, and he repented that he had asked this thing.[3] After that he went with the seventy elders to Sinai, and a cloud, white and glistening, came down and rested on the head of Moses, and then descended and wholly enveloped him, so that the seventy saw him not; and when he was in the cloud, he received again the Tables of the Commandments, and he came forth out of the cloud. But they murmured that they had not also received the revelation. Then the cloud enveloped them also, and they heard all the words that had been spoken to Moses; and after that they said, "Now we believe, because we have heard with our own ears."

Then the wrath of God blazed forth, and a thundering was heard so great and terrible that they fainted and died. But Moses feared, and he prayed to God, and God restored the seventy men to life again, and they came down the Mount with him.[4]

And it was at this time that the face of Moses shone with

[1] Weil, pp. 172, 173.
[2] Koran, Sura vii. v. 139.
[3] Tabari, i. p. 364.
[4] Ibid., i. c. lxxv.

the splendour which had come upon him from the brightness of the glory of the Lord's Shekinah in the time of His speaking with him. And Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, and, behold, the glory of his face was dazzling, so that they were afraid to come near to him. And Moses called to them, and Aaron, and all the princes of the congregation; and he taught them all that the Lord had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. And when Moses spoke with them, he had a veil upon his face; and when he went up to speak with the Lord, he removed the veil from his countenance until he came forth.[1]

This was the reason why the face of Moses shone. He saw the light which God had created, whereby Adam was enabled to see from one end of the earth to the other. God showed this light now to Moses, and thereby he was able to see to Dan.[2]

When Moses went up into the Mount, a cloud received him, and bore him into heaven. On his way, he met the door-keeper Kemuel, chief of twelve thousands of angels of destruction; they were angels of fire; and he would have prevented Moses from advancing: then Moses pronounced the Name in twelve letters, revealed to him by God from the Burning Bush, and the angel and his host recoiled before that word twelve thousand leagues. But some say that Moses smote the angel, and wounded him.

A little further, Moses met another angel; this was Hadarniel, who had a terrible voice, and every word he uttered split into twelve thousand lightnings; he reigned six hundred thousand leagues higher than Kemuel. Moses, in fear, wept at his voice, and would have fallen out of the cloud, had not God restrained him. Then the prophet pronounced the Name of seventy-two letters, and the angel fled.

Next he came to the fiery angel Sandalfon, and he would have fallen out of the cloud, but God held him up. Then he

[1] Targum of Palestine, i. p. 561.
[2] Jalkut Rubeni, fol. 117, col. 1.

reached the river of flame, called Rigjon, which flows from the beasts which are beneath the Throne, and is filled with their sweat; across this God led him.[1]

It is asserted by the Rabbis that Moses learnt the whole law in the forty days that he was in the Mount, but as he descended from the immediate presence of God, he entered the region where stood the angels guarding the Mount, and when he saw the Angel of Fear, the Angel of Sweat, the Angel of Trembling, and the Angel of Cold Shuddering, he was so filled with consternation, that he forgot all that he had learnt.

Then God sent the Angel Jephipha, who brought back all to his remembrance; and, armed with the law, Moses passed the ranks of all the angels, and each gave him some secret or mystery; one the art of mixing simples, one that of reading in the stars, another that of compounding antidotes, a fourth the secret of name, or the Kabalistic mystery.[2]

It is said by the Mussulmans, that when the law was declared to the children of Israel by Moses, they refused to receive it; then Mount Sinai rose into the air, and moved above them, and they fled from it; but it followed them, and hung over their heads ready to crush them. And Moses said, "Accept the law, or the mountain will fall on you and destroy you."

Then they fell on their faces and placed the right side of the brow and right cheek against the ground and looked up with the left eye at the mountain that hung above them, and said, "We will accept the law." This is the manner in which the Jews to this day perform their worship, says Tabari; they place the brow and right cheek and eye upon the ground, and turn the left cheek and eye to heaven, and in this position they pray.[3]

[1] Jalkut Rubeni, fol. 107, cols. 2, 3.
[2] Ibid., fol. 107, col. 3.
[3] Tabari, i. p. 371; also Midrash, fol. 30.

7. THE MANNA. (Exod. xvi.)

All the time that Israel wandered in the wilderness they were given manna, or angels' food. This food is ground by the angels in heaven, as Moses saw when he was there. For when Moses was in heaven, he knew not when it was night and when it was day, till he listened to the song of the angels; and when they sang "Holy God," then he knew it was morning below on earth; and when they sang "Blessed be thou," he knew it was evening below. Also he observed the angels grinding the manna and casting it down; and then he knew it was night, and they were strewing it for the Israelites to gather in the morning.[1] It is in the third firmament, called Schechakim (clouds), that the mills are in which manna is ground.[2] Along with the manna fell pearls and diamonds, and on the mountains it was heaped so high that it could be seen from afar.[3]

And the manna, this bread from heaven, contained in itself all sweetness; and whatsoever any man desired to eat, the manna tasted to him as if it were that food.[4] Thus, if any one said, "I wish I had a fat bird," the manna tasted like a fat bird. But usually it had the taste of cakes made of oil, honey, and fine flour, according to the words of the Lord, "*My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey wherewith I fed thee*" (Ezek. xvi. 10).[5] The Targum of Palestine thus describes the fall of the manna:—In the morning there was a fall of holy dew, prepared as a table,[6] round about the camp; and the clouds ascended and caused manna to descend upon the dew; and there was upon the face of the desert a

[1] Parascha R. Bechai, fol. 116.
[2] Talmud, Tract. Hajada, fol. 12, col. 2.
[3] Talmud, Tract. Joma, fol. 75, col. 1.
[4] This is sanctioned by Scripture: "*Thou feddest Thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste.*" (Wisdom, xvi. 20.)
[5] Talmud, Tract. Joma, fol. 75, col. 1; Schemoth Rabba, fol. 115, col. 4.
[6] To this tradition perhaps David refers, Ps. xxiii. 5, lxxviii. 19.

minute substance in lines, minute as the hoar frost upon the ground. And the sons of Israel beheld, and wondered, and said to one another, "Man hu?" (What is it?) for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which hath been laid up for you from the beginning in the heavens on high, and now the Lord will give it you to eat. This is the word which the Lord hath dictated: You are to gather of it; every man according to the number of the persons of his tabernacle."

And the children of Israel did so, and gathered manna more or less. And Moses said to them, "Let no man reserve of it till the morning."

But some of them, Dathan and Abiram, men of wickedness, did reserve of it till the morning; but it produced worms, and putrefied. And they gathered from the time of the dawn until the fourth hour of the day; when the sun had waxed hot upon it, it liquefied and made streams of water, which flowed away into the great sea; and wild animals that were clean, and cattle, came to drink of it; and the sons of Israel hunted, and ate them.[1]

Some of the Gentiles, the Edomites and Midianites, came up, and, seeing the chosen people eating, they also gathered of the manna and tasted, but it was to them as wormwood.[2]

8. THE SMITTEN ROCK. (Exod. xvii. 1–7.)

And all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed from the desert of Sin and encamped in Rephidim, a place where their hands were idle in the commandments of the law, and the fountains were dry, and there was no water for the people to drink.

And the wicked of the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said

[1] Targum of Palestine, i. pp. 499, 500.
[2] Jalkut Shimoni, fol. 73, col. 4.

to them, "Why contend ye with me? Why tempt ye the Lord?"

But the people were athirst for water, and the people murmured against Moses and said, "Why hast thou made us come up out of Egypt to kill us, and our children, and our cattle, with thirst?"

And Moses prayed before the Lord, saying, "What shall I do for this people? Yet a little while, and they will stone me."

And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass over before the people, and take the rod, with which thou didst smite the river, in thine hand, and go from the face of their murmuring. Behold, I will stand before thee there, on the spot where thou sawest the impression of the foot on Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock with thy rod, and therefrom shall come forth waters for drinking, and the people shall drink."

And Moses did so before the Elders of Israel. And he called the name of that place Temptation and Strife; because the people strove with him there, and tempted God.[1]

Tabari gives these particulars concerning the smitten rock. In the desert there was no water. Moses prayed to God, and He commanded him to strike a rock with his staff.

Some say that this was an ordinary stone in the desert, others that it was a stone from Sinai which Moses carried about with him that he might stand on it whenever he prayed. Moses struck the rock, and twelve streams spouted from it.

Then Moses said, "You have manna and quails in abundance, gather only sufficient for the day, and you shall have fresh on the morrow." But they would not obey his word; therefore the Lord withdrew the birds, and the people were famished. Then Moses besought the Lord, and the quails were restored to them. And this is how the quails fell in the camp.[2] A wind smote them as they flew over the camp, and broke their wings.

[1] Targum of Palestine, i. pp. 501, 502.

[2] Tabari, i. p. 393.

Then the people murmured again, and said to Moses, "The heat is intolerable, we cannot endure it."

So he prayed, and God sent a cloud to overshadow Israel; and it gave them cool shade all the day.[1]

After that, they complained, "We want clothes." Then God wrought a marvel, and their clothes waxed not old and ragged, nor did their shoes wear out, nor did dirt and dust settle on their garments.[2]

It is also commonly related that the rock followed the Israelites, like the pillar of fire and the manna, all the time they went through the wilderness; to this tradition S. Paul alludes when he says, "*They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.*"[3]

9. MOSES VISITS EL KHOUDR.

One day, say the Mussulmans, Moses boasted before Joshua of his wisdom. Then said God to him, "Go to the place where the sea of the Greeks joins the Persian Gulf, and there you will find one who surpasses you in wisdom."

Moses therefore announced to the Hebrews, who continued their murmurs, that, in punishment for their stiffneckedness and rebellion, they were condemned by God to wander for forty years in the desert.

Then having asked God how he should recognize the wise man of whom God had spoken to him, he was bidden take a fish in a basket; "and," said God, "the fish will lead thee to my faithful servant."

Moses went on his way with Joshua, having the fish in a basket. In the evening he arrived on the shore of the sea and fell asleep.

When he awoke in the morning, Joshua forgot to take the

[1] Koran, Sura ii. v. 54.
[2] Tabari, i. p. 394; but also Deut. viii. 4, Nehemiah ix. 21.
[3] 1 Cor. x. 4.

fish, and Moses not regarding it, they had advanced far on their journey before they remembered that they had neglected the basket and fish. Then they returned and sought where they had slept, but they found the basket empty. As they were greatly troubled at this loss, they saw the fish before them, standing upright like a man, in the sea; and it led them, and they followed along the coast; and they did not stay till their guide suddenly vanished.

Supposing that they had reached their destination, they explored the neighbourhood, and found a cave, at the entrance to which were inscribed these words, "In the Name of the all-powerful and all-merciful God." Joshua and Moses, entering this cavern, found a man seated there, fresh and blooming, but with white hair and a long white beard which descended to his feet. This was the prophet El Khoudr.

Some say he was the same as Elias, some that he was Jeremiah, some that he was Lot, and some that he was Jonah. The greatest uncertainty reigns as to who El Khoudr really is. All that is known of him is that he went with Alexander, the two-horned, to the West, and drank of the fountain of immortality, and thenceforth he lives an undying life, ever fresh, but also marked with the signs of a beautiful old age.

El Khoudr derives his name from the circumstance of his having sat on a bare stone, and when he rose from it the stone was green and covered with grass.[1]

In later times he was put to death for the true faith with various horrible tortures, by an idolatrous king, but he revived after each execution.

The explanation of the mystery of El Khoudr is this. He is the old Sun-god Thammuz of the Sabæans, and when he was dethroned by Mohammed, he sank in popular tradition to the level of a prophet, and all the old myths of the Sun-god were related of the prophet.

His wandering to the West is the sun setting there; his drink-

[1] Tabari, i. p. 373.

ing there of the well of immortality is the sun plunging into the sea. His clothing the dry rock with grass is significant of the power of the sun over vegetation. His torments are figures of the sun setting, in storm, in flames of crimson, or swallowed by the black thunder-cloud; but from all his perils he rises again in glory in the eastern sky.[1]

Moses said to El Khoudr, "Take me for thy disciple, permit me to accompany thee, and to admire the wisdom God hath given thee."

"Thou canst not understand it," answered the venerable man. "Moreover, thy stay with me is short."

"I will be patient and submissive," said Moses; "for God's sake, reject me not."

"Thou mayest follow me," said the sage. "But ask me no questions, and wait till I give thee, at my pleasure, the sense of that which thou comprehendest not."

Moses accepted the condition, and El Khoudr led him to the sea, where was a ship at anchor. The prophet took a hatchet, and cut two timbers out of her side, so that she foundered.

"What art thou doing?" asked Moses; "the people on board the ship will be drowned."

"Did I not say to thee that thou wouldst not remain patient for long?" said the sage.

"Pardon me," said Moses; "I forgot what I had promised."

El Khoudr continued his course. Soon they met a beautiful child who was playing with shells on the sea-shore. The prophet took a knife which hung at his girdle, and cut the throat of the child.

"Wherefore hast thou killed the innocent?" asked Moses, in horror.

[1] See my "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," article on S. George. I have no doubt whatever that El Khoudr, identified by the Jews with Elias, is the original of the Wandering Jew. I did not know this when I wrote on the "Wandering Jew" in my "Curious Myths," but I believe this to be the key to the whole story.

"Did I not say to thee," repeated El Khoudr, "that thy journey with me would be short?"

"Pardon me once more," said Moses; "if I raise my voice again, drive me from thee."

After having continued their journey for some way, they arrived at a large town, hungry and tired. But no one would take them in, or give them food, except for money.

El Khoudr, seeing that the wall of a large house, from which he had been driven away, menaced ruin, set it up firmly, and then retired. Moses was astonished, and said, "Thou hast done the work of several masons for many days. Ask for a wage which will pay for our lodging."

Then answered the old man, "We must separate. But before we part, I will explain what I have done. The ship which I injured belongs to a poor family. If it had sailed, it would have fallen into the hands of pirates. The injury I did can be easily repaired, and the delay will save the vessel for those worthy people who own her. The child I killed had a bad disposition, and it would have corrupted its parents. In its place God will give them pious children. The house which I repaired belongs to orphans, whose father was a man of substance. It has been let to unworthy people. Under the wall is hidden a treasure. Had the tenants mended the wall, they would have found and kept the treasure. Now the wall will stand till its legitimate owners come into the house, when they will find the treasure. Thou seest I have not acted blindly and foolishly."

Moses asked pardon of the prophet, and he returned to his people in the wilderness.[1]

The same story, with some variation in the incidents, is related in the Talmud.

God, seeing Moses uneasy, called him to the summit of a mountain, and designed to explain to him how He governed the world. He bade the prophet look upon the earth. He

[1] Weil, pp. 176-81; Tabari, i. c. lxxvi.; Koran, Sura xviii.

saw a fountain flowing at the foot of the mountain. A soldier went to it to drink. A young man came next to the fountain, and finding a purse of gold, which the soldier had left there by accident, he kept it and went his way.

The soldier, having lost his purse, returned to search for it, and demanded it of an old man whom he found seated by the spring. The old man protested that he had not found it, and called God to witness the truth of his assertion. But the soldier, disbelieving him, drew his sword upon him and killed him.

Moses was filled with horror. But God said to him: "Be not surprised at this event; this old man had murdered the father of the soldier; the soldier would have wasted the money in riotous living; in the hands of the youth it will serve to nourish his aged parents, who are dying of poverty.[1]

10. THE MISSION OF THE SPIES. (Numb. xiii. xiv.)

And the Lord spake with Moses, saying, "Send thou keen-sighted men who may explore the land of Canaan, which I will give to the children of Israel; one man for each tribe of their fathers shalt thou send from the presence of all their leaders."

And Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran; all of them acute men, who had been appointed heads over the sons of Israel. And Moses said to them, "Go up on this side by the south, and ascend the mountain, and survey the country, what it is, and the people who dwell in it; whether they be strong or weak, few or many; what the land is in which they dwell, whether good or bad; what the cities they inhabit, whether they live in towns that are open or walled; and the reputation of the land, whether its productions are rich or poor, and the trees of it be fruitful or not; and do valiantly, and bring back some of the fruit of the land."

And the day on which they went was the nineteenth of the

[1] Voltaire has taken this legend as the basis of his story of Zadig.

month Sivan, about the days of the first grapes. They came to the stream of the grapes in Eshkol, and cut from thence a branch, with one cluster of grapes, and carried it on a rod between two men; and also of the pomegranates and of the figs; and the wine dropped from them like a stream.[1]

And when they returned, they related, "We have seen the land which we are to conquer with the sword, and it is good and fruitful. The strongest camel is scarcely able to carry one bunch of grapes; one ear of corn yields enough to feed a whole family; and one pomegranate shell could contain five armed men. But the inhabitants of the land and their cities are in keeping with the productions of the soil. We saw men, the smallest of whom was six hundred cubits high. They were astonished at us, on account of our diminutive stature, and laughed at us. Their houses are also in proportion, walled up to heaven, so that an eagle could hardly soar above them."[2]

When the spies had given this report, the Israelites murmured, and said, "We are not able to go up to the people, for they are stronger than we."

And the spies said, "The country is a land that killeth its inhabitants with diseases; and all the people who are in it are giants, masters of evil ways. And we appeared as locusts before them."

And all the congregation lifted up their voices and wept; and it was confirmed that that day, the ninth of the month Ab, should be one of weeping for ever to that people; and it has ever after been one of a succession of calamities in the history of the Jews.

"Would that we had died in the land of Egypt," said the people; "would that we had died in the wilderness. Why has the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword of the Canaanites, and our wives and little ones to become a prey?"[3]

[1] Targums, ii. pp. 380, 381. [2] Weil, p. 175.
[3] Targums, ii. p. 382.

Then the Lord was wroth with the spies, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, saving only Joshua and Caleb, who had not given an evil report of the land.[1]

The account of the Targum of Palestine is different. The Targum says that the men who had brought an evil report of the land died on the seventh day of the month Elul, with worms coming from their navels, and with worms devouring their tongues.[2]

The Rabbis relate that though for the wickedness of men the fruitfulness of the Holy Land diminished, yet in places it remained as great as of old. "The Raf Chiji, son of Ada, was the teacher of the children of the Resch Lakisch; and once he was absent three days, and the children were without instruction. When he returned, the Resch Lakisch asked him why he had been so long absent. He answered, 'My father sent me to his vine, which is bound to a tree, and I gathered from it, the first day, three hundred bunches of grapes, which gave as much juice as would fill two hundred and eighty and eight egg-shells (three gerabhs). Next day I cut three hundred bunches, of which two gave one gerabh. The third day I cut three hundred bunches, which yielded one gerabh of juice; and I left more than half the bunches uncut.' Then said the Resch Lakisch to him, 'If thou hadst been more diligent in the education of my children, the vine would have yielded yet more.'

"Rami, son of Ezechiel, once went to the inhabitants of Berak, and saw goats feeding under the fig-trees, and the milk flowed from their udders, and the honey dropped from the figs, and the two mingled in one stream. Then he said, 'This is the land promised to our forefathers, flowing with milk and honey.'

"The Rabbi Jacob, son of Dosethai, said that from Lud to Ono is three miles, and in the morning twilight I started on my way, and I was over ankles in honey out of the figs.

[1] Weil, p. 176. [2] Targums, ii. p. 386.

"The Resch Lakisch said that he had himself seen a stream of milk and honey in the neighbourhood of Zippori, sixteen miles long and the same breadth.

"The Rabbi Chelbo and Rabbi Avera and Rabbi Jose, son of Hannina, once came to a place where they were offered a honeycomb as large as the frying-pan of the village Heiro; they ate a portion, they gave their asses a portion, and they distributed a portion to any one who would take it.

"Rabbi Joshua, son of Levi, once came to Gabla, and saw grape-bunches in a vineyard as big as calves, hanging between the vines, and he said, 'The calves are in the vineyard.' But the inhabitants told him they were grapes. Then said he, 'O land, land! withdraw thy fruits. Do not offer to these heathen those fruits which have been taken from us on account of our sins.'

"A year after, Rabbi Chija passed that way, and he saw the bunches like goats. So he said, 'The goats are in the vineyard.' But the inhabitants said, 'They are grape-bunches; depart from us and do not unto us as did your fellow last year.'"[1]

II. OF KORAH AND HIS COMPANY. (Numb. xvi.)

And the Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the sons of Israel, and bid them make fringes not of threads, nor of yarn, nor of fibre, but after a peculiar fashion shall they make them. They shall cut off the heads of the filaments, and suspend by five ligatures, four in the midst of three, upon the four corners of their garments, and they shall put upon the edge of their garments a border of blue (of embroidery of hyacinth)."[2]

But Korah, son of Ezhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, refused to wear the blue border.

[1] Tract. Kethuvoth, fol. 111, col. 2.
[2] Targum of Palestine, ii. p. 390.

Moses had said, "The fringes are to be of white, with one line of blue;" but Korah said, "I will make mine altogether of blue;" and the two hundred and fifty men of the sons of Israel, who had been leaders of the congregation at the time when the journeys and encampments were appointed, supported Korah.[1]

Korah was a goldsmith, and Moses greatly honoured him, for he was his cousin, and the handsomest man of all Israel. When Moses returned from the Mount, he bade Korah destroy the calf; but the fire would not consume it. Then Moses prayed, and God showed him the philosopher's stone, which is a plant that grows in great abundance by the shores of the Red Sea, but none knew of its virtues before. Now, this plant turns metals into gold, and also if a twig of it be cast into gold, it dissolves it away. Moses instructed Korah in the virtues of this herb. Then Korah dissolved the calf by means of it, but he also used it to convert base metals into gold, and thus he became very rich.

Korah had great quantities of this herb, and he made vast stores of gold. He accumulated treasures. What he desired he bought, and he surrounded himself with servants clad in cloth of gold. He built brick houses with brass doors, and filled them to the roof with gold, and he made his servants walk before him with the keys of his treasure-houses hung round their necks. He had twenty men carrying these keys; and still he increased in wealth, so he placed the keys on camels; and when he still built more treasuries and turned more substance into gold, he increased the number of keys to such an extent that he had sixty camel loads of them. Moses knew whence Korah derived his wealth, but the rest of the congregation of Israel knew not.

After that, Korah did that which was wrong, and he broke the commandment of Moses, and would have no blue border on his servants' tunics, but habited them in scarlet, and

[1] Targums, ii. p. 391.

mounted them on red horses. Neither did he confine himself to the meats which Moses permitted as clean.

Then God ordered Moses to ask Korah to give one piece of money for every thousand that he possessed. But Korah refused. This state of affairs continued ten years. When his destiny was accomplished, he was lifted up with pride, and he resolved to humble Moses before all the people.

Now, there was among the children of Israel a woman of bad character. Korah gave her large bribes, and said to her, "I will assemble all the congregation, and bring Moses before them, and do thou bring a false accusation against him."

The woman consented.

Then Korah did as he had said; and when all the assembly of Israel was gathered together, he spake against Moses all that the lying witness had invented. Then he brought forth the woman. But when she saw all the elders of the congregation before her, she feared, and she said, "Korah hath suborned me with gold to speak false witness against Moses, to cause him to be put to death."

And when Korah was thus convicted, Moses cried, "Get yourselves up and separate from him." Then all the people fled away from him on either side. And the earth opened her lips and closed them on Korah's feet to the ankles.

But Korah laughed, and said, "What magic is this?"

Moses cried, "Earth, seize him!"

Then the earth seized him to his knees.

Korah said, "O Moses! ask the earth to release me, and I will do all thou desirest of me."

But Moses was very wroth, and he would not hearken, but cried, "Earth, seize him!"

Then the earth seized him to the waist.

Korah pleaded for his life. He said, "I will do all thou desirest of me, only release me!"

But Moses cried again, "Earth, seize him!"

And the earth gulped him down as far as his breast, and his hands were under the earth.

Once more he cried, "Moses! spare me and release me, because of our relationship!"

Moses was filled with bitterness, and he bade the earth swallow him; and he went down quick into the pit, and was seen no more.

Then, when Moses was returning thanks to God, the Lord turned His face away from him and said, "Thy servant asked of thee forgiveness so many times, and thou didst not forgive him."

Moses answered, "O Lord, I desired that he should ask pardon of Thee and not of me."

The Lord said, "If he had cried but once to Me, I would have forgiven him."[1]

The earth swallowed Korah and seventy men, and they are retained in the earth along with all his treasures till the Resurrection Day.

Every Thursday, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram go before the Messiah, and they ask, "When wilt Thou come and release us from our prison? When will the end of these wonders be?"

But the Messiah answers them, "Go and ask the Patriarchs;" but this they are ashamed to do.[2]

They sit in the third mansion of Sheol, not in any lowest one; nor are they there tormented, because Korah promised to hear and obey Moses, as he was being engulfed.[3]

The Arabic name for Korah is Karoun, and under this name he has returned to Rabbinic legends, and the identity of Korah and Karoun has not been observed.

The Rabbis relate of Karoun that he is an evil angel, and that Moses dug a deep pit for him in the land of Gad, and cast

[1] Tabari, i. c. lxxvii.; Weil, pp. 182, 183; Abulfeda, p. 33.

[2] Eisenmenger, ii. p. 305. Possibly the passage Zech. ix. 11, 12, may contain an allusion to this tradition.

[3] Ibid., p. 342.

him into it. But whenever the Israelites sinned, Karoun crept out of his subterranean dwelling and plagued them.[1]

This is a curious instance of allegorizing upon a false interpretation of a name. The Karoun of the Mussulmans is clearly identical with Korah, but Karoun in Hebrew means Anger, and Karoun was supposed to be the Angel of the Anger of the Lord, and the story of his emerging from his pit to punish the sinful Israelites is simply a figurative mode of saying that the anger of the Lord came upon them.

12. THE WARS OF THE ISRAELITES.

The children of Israel had many foes to contend with. Amongst these were the Amorites. They hid in caves to form an ambuscade against the people of God, intending, when the Israelites had penetrated into a defile between two mountains, to sally forth upon them and to overthrow them. But they did not know that the ark went before Israel, smoothing the rough places and levelling the mountains.[2] Now, when the ark drew near the place where the ambush was, the mountains fell in upon the Amorites, and the Israelites passed on, and knew not that they had been delivered from a great danger. But there were two lepers named Eth and Hav, who followed the camp, and they saw the blood bubbling out from under the mountain; and thus the fate of the Amorites was made known.[3]

The Israelites found a redoubtable enemy in Og, king of Bashan, who was one of the giants who had been saved from the old world by clambering on the roof of the ark; but his weight had so depressed the vessel, that Noah was obliged to turn out the hippopotamus and rhinoceros to preserve the ark from foundering.

[1] Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 45.
[2] Perhaps the passage Isai. xl. 4 may be an allusion to this tradition.
[3] Talmud, Tract. Beracoth, fol. 54, col. 2; Targum of Palestine, ii. pp. 411–13.

Og determined to destroy Moses. Moses was ten cubits in height, and when Og came against him, he took a hatchet of ten cubits' length, and he made a jump into the air, and hit Og on the ankle. Og tore up a mountain, and put it on his head to throw it upon Moses; but the ants ate out the inside of the mountain, and it sank over Og's head to his neck, and he could not draw his head out, for his teeth grew into tusks and thrust through the mountain, and he was blinded and caught as in a trap. Thus Moses was able to slay him.[1]

Some further details on Og, furnished by the Rabbis, will assist the reader in estimating the powers of Moses.

At one meal, Og ate a thousand oxen and as many wild roes, and his drink was a thousand firkins; one drop of the sweat from his brow weighed thirty-six pounds.[2] Of his size the following authentic details are given. The Rabbi Johanan said, "I was once a grave-digger, and I ran after a deer, and went in at one end of a shin-bone of a dead man, and I ran for three miles and could not catch the deer or reach the end of the bone. When I went back, I inquired, and was told that this was the shin-bone of Og, king of Bashan."[3] The sole of his foot was forty miles long. Once, when he was quarrelling with Abraham, one of his teeth fell out, and Abraham made a bed out of the tooth, and slept in it; but some say he made a chair out of it.[4]

When the Israelites came to Edrei and fought against it, in the night Og came and sat down on the wall, and his feet reached the ground. Next morning Moses looked out and said, "I do not understand how the men of Edrei can have built a second wall so high during the night."

Then it was revealed to him that what he had taken for a wall was Og.[5] Og had built sixty cities, and the smallest was sixty miles high. These cities were in Argob.[6]

[1] Talmud, Tract. Beracoth, fol. 54, col. 2; Targums, ii. p. 416; Yaschar, p. 1296. [2] Talmud, Tract. Sopherim, fol. 14, col. 4.
[3] Ibid., Tract. Nida, fol. 24, col. 2.
[4] Jalkut Cadasch, fol. 16, col. 2. [5] Eisenmenger, i. p. 389.
[6] Talmud, Tract. Sopherim, fol. 14, col. 4.

The Moabites also resisted Israel, and they were encouraged by Balaam the son of Beor.

Balak, king of Moab, sent to Balaam to curse Israel. Then Balaam rose in the morning and made ready his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. The Mussulman account is that Balaam, having been told by God not to go, resolved to obey, but the princes of Moab bribed his wife, and she gave him no peace till he consented to go to Balak with his messengers.[1] But the anger of the Lord was kindled, because he would go to curse them, and the angel of the Lord stood in the way to be an adversary to him. But he sat upon his ass, and his two sons, Jannes and Jambres, were with him.

And the ass discerned the angel of the Lord standing in the way with a drawn sword in his hand, and the ass turned aside out of the road to go into the field; and Balaam smote the ass. And the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path that was in the midst between the vineyards, in the place where Jacob and Laban raised the mound, the pillars on this side and the observatory on that side,[2] that neither should pass the limit to do evil to the other. And as the ass discerned the angel of the Lord, and thrust herself against the hedge, and bruised Balaam's foot by the hedge, he smote her again. Ten things were created after the world had been founded at the coming in of the Sabbath between sunset and sunrise,—the manna, the well, the rod of Moses, the diamond, the rainbow, the cloud of glory, the mouth of the earth, the writing on the tables of the covenant, the demons, and the speaking ass.

Then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to thee, that thou hast smitten me twice?"

And Balaam said to the ass, "Because thou hast been false to me; if there were now a sword in my hand, I would kill thee."

And the ass said to Balaam, "Woe to thee, wanting in understanding! Behold, thou hast not power with all thy skill

[1] Tabari, i. p. 398. [2] Gen. xxxi. 51.

to curse me, an unclean beast, which am to die in this world, and not to enter the world to come; how much less canst thou curse the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on whose account the world was created?"[1]

Balaam finding that he could not curse the people, and that they were under the protection of the Most High, saw that the only way to ruin them was by leading them into sin. Therefore he advised Balak, and the king appointed the daughters of the Midianites for the tavern-booths at Beth Jeshimoth, by the snow mountain, where they sold sweetmeats cheaper than their price. And Israel trafficked with them for their sweet cakes; and when the maidens brought out the image of Peor from their bundles, the Israelites did not notice it to take it away, and becoming accustomed to it they went on to sacrifice to it.[2]

And Moses saw one of the sons of Israel come by, holding a Midianitess by the hand, and Moses rebuked him. Then said the man, "What is it that is wrong in this? Didst not thou thyself take to wife a Midianitess, the daughter of Jethro?"

When Moses heard this, he trembled and swooned away. But Phinehas cried, "Where are the lions of the tribe of Judah?" and he took a lance in his hand and slew the man and the woman.

Twelve miracles were wrought for Phinehas; but they need not be repeated here.[3]

Then all the Israelites went forth against the Midianites and defeated them; and when they numbered the slain, Balaam and his sons were discovered among the dead.

13. THE DEATH OF AARON. (Numb. xx. 22—29.)

Moses was full of grief when the word of the Lord came to him that Aaron, his brother, was to die. That night he had no rest, and when it began to dawn towards morning, he rose and went to the tent of Aaron.

[1] Targums, ii. pp. 419–21. [2] Ibid., pp. 432–3. [3] Ibid., pp. 434–5.

Aaron was much surprised to see his brother come in so early, and he said, "Wherefore art thou come?"

Moses answered, "All night long have I been troubled, and have had no sleep, for certain things in the Law came upon me, and they seemed to me to be heavy and unendurable; I have come to thee that thou shouldest relieve my mind." So they opened the book together and read from the first word; and at every sentence they said, "That is holy, and great, and righteous."

Soon they came to the history of Adam; and Moses stayed from reading when he arrived at the Fall, and he cried bitterly. "O Adam, thou hast brought death into the world!"

Aaron said, "Why art thou so troubled thereat, my brother? Is not death the way to Eden?"

"It is however very painful. Think also, that both thou and I must some day die. How many years thinkest thou we shall live?"

Aaron.—"Perhaps twenty."

Moses.—"Oh no! not so many."

Aaron.—"Then fifteen."

Moses.—"No, my brother, not so many."

Aaron.—"Then ten years."

Moses.—"No, not so many."

Aaron.—"Then surely it must be five."

Moses.—"I say again, not so many."

Then said Aaron, hesitating, "Is it then one?"

And Moses said, "Not so much."

Full of anxiety and alarm Aaron kept silence. Then said Moses gently, "O my beloved! would it not be good to say of thee as it was said of Abraham, that he was gathered to his fathers in peace?" Aaron was silent.

Then said Moses, "If God were to say that thou shouldst die in a hundred years, what wouldst thou say?"

Aaron said, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

Moses.—"And if God were to say to thee that thou shouldst die this year, what wouldst thou answer?"

Aaron.—"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

Moses.—"And if He were to call thee to-day, what wouldst thou say?"

Aaron.—"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

"Then," said Moses, "arise and follow me."

At that same hour went forth Moses, Aaron, and Eleazer, his son; they ascended into Mount Hor, and the people looked on, nothing doubting, for they knew not what was to take place.

Then said the Most High to His angels, "Behold the new Isaac; he follows his younger brother, who leads him to death."

When they had reached the summit of the mountain, there opened before them a cavern. They went in, and found a death-bed prepared by the hands of the angels. Aaron laid himself down upon it and made ready for death.

Then Moses cried out in grief, "Woe is me! we were two, when we comforted our sister in her death; in this, thy last hour, I am with thee to solace thee; when I die, who will comfort me?"

Then a voice was heard from heaven, "Fear not; God himself will be with thee."

On one side stood Moses, on the other Eleazer, and they kissed the dying man on the brow, and took from off him his sacerdotal vestments to clothe Eleazer his son with them. They took off one portion of the sacred apparel, and they laid that on Eleazer; and then they removed another portion, and laid that on Eleazer; and as they stripped Aaron, a silvery veil of cloud sank over him like a pall and covered him.

Aaron seemed to be asleep.

Then Moses said, "My brother, what dost thou feel?"

"I feel nothing but the cloud that envelopes me," answered he.

After a little pause, Moses said again, "My brother, what dost thou feel?"

He answered feebly, "The cloud surrounds me and bereaves me of all joy."

And the soul of Aaron was parted from his body. And as it went up Moses cried once more, "Alas, my brother! what dost thou feel?"

And the soul replied, "I feel such joy, that I would it had come to me sooner."

Then cried Moses, "Oh thou blessed, peaceful death! Oh, may such a death be my lot!"

Moses and Eleazer came down alone from the mountain, and the people wailed because Aaron was no more. But the coffin of Aaron rose, borne by angels, in the sight of the whole congregation, and was carried into heaven, whilst the angels sang: "The priest's lips have kept knowledge, have spoken truth!"[1]

The Mussulman story is not quite the same.

One version is that both Moses and Aaron ascended Hor, knowing that one of them was to die, but uncertain which, and they found a cave, and a sarcophagus therein with the inscription on it, "I am for him whom I fit."

Moses tried to lie down in it, but his feet hung out; Aaron next entered it, lay down, and it fitted him exactly.

Then Gabriel led Moses and the sons of Aaron out of the cave, and when they were again admitted Aaron was dead.[2]

Another version is this: God announced to Moses that he would call Aaron to Himself. Then Moses took his brother from the camp, and they went into the desert, till they came to a tree. When Aaron saw the shadow, he said, "O my brother, whose tree is this?"

Moses said, "God alone knows."

Then spake Aaron, "I am weary, and the shadow is cool; suffer me to repose a little while under the tree."

Moses said, "Lie down, my brother; and may thy rest be sweet."

[1] Jalkut, fol. 240; Rabboth, fol. 275, col. 1; Midrash, fol. 285.
[2] Weil, p. 185.

Aaron lay down, and Moses sat beside him till he died.

Then suddenly the tree, the shadow, and Aaron vanished; and Moses returned alone to the Israelites. They were angry with him, that he had not brought back Aaron, and they took up stones against him. But Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed them Aaron on a bed, and he was dead; and the people looked, and wondered, and wept: then said a voice from heaven, "God hath taken him." The people bewailed him many days.[1]

14. THE DEATH OF MOSES.

When the time came for Moses to die, the Lord called Gabriel to Him, and said, "Go and bring the soul of My servant Moses to Paradise."

The angel Gabriel answered in astonishment, "Lord, Lord, how can I venture to give death to that man, the like of whom all generations of men have not seen?"

Then the Most High called to Him Michael, and said, "Go and bring the soul of My servant Moses to Paradise."

The angel Michael answered in fear, "Lord, Lord, I was his instructor in heavenly lore! How can I bear death to my pupil?"

Then the Most High called to Him Sammael, and said, "Go and bring the soul of My servant Moses to Paradise."

The angel Sammael flushed red with joy. He clothed himself in anger, and grasped his sword, and rushed down upon the holy one. But he found him writing the incommunicable name of God, and he saw his face shine with divine light. Then he stood irresolute, and his sword sank with the point to earth.

"What seekest thou?" asked Moses.

"I am sent to give thee death," answered the trembling angel. "All mortals must submit to that."

But not I," said Moses, "at least from thee; I, consecrated from my mother's womb, the discloser of divine mysteries, the

[1] Tabari, i. c. lxxix.; Abulfeda, p. 35.

mouthpiece of God, I will not surrender my soul into thy hand."

Then Sammael flew away.

But a voice fell from heaven, "Moses, Moses, thine hour is come!"

"My Lord," answered Moses, "give not my soul into the hands of the Angel of Death."

Then the Bath-kol, the heavenly voice, fell again, "Be comforted. I myself will take thy soul, and I myself will bury thee."[1]

Then Moses went home, and knocked at the door. His wife Zipporah opened; and, when she saw him pale and trembling, she inquired the reason.

Moses answered, "Give God the praise. My hour of death s come."

"What! must a man who has spoken with God die like ordinary mortals?"

"He must. Even the angels Gabriel, Michael, and Israfiel must die; God alone is eternal, and dies not."

Zipporah wept and swooned away.

When she recovered her senses, Moses asked, "Where are my children?"

"They are put to bed, and are asleep."

"Wake them up; I must bid them farewell."

Zipporah went to the children's bed and cried, "Arise, poor orphans! arise, and bid your father farewell; for this is his last day in this world, and the first in the world beyond."

The children awoke in terror, and cried, "Alas! who will pity us when we are fatherless? who will stand protector on our threshold?"

Moses was so moved that he wept. Then God said to him, "What mean these tears? Fearest thou death, or dost thou part reluctantly with this world?"

"I fear not death, nor do I part reluctantly with this world; but I lament these children, who have lost their grandfather

[1] Rabboth, fol. 302 b; Devarim Rabba, fol. 246, col. 2.

Jethro and their uncle Aaron, and who now must lose their father."

"In whom then did thy mother confide, when she cast thee in the bulrush ark into the water?"

"In Thee, O Lord."

"Who gave thee power before Pharaoh? who strengthened thee with thy staff to divide the sea?"

"Thou, O Lord."

"Who led thee through the wilderness, and gave thee bread from heaven, and opened to thee the rock of flint?"

"Thou, O Lord."

"Then canst thou not trust thy orphans to Me, who am a father to the fatherless? But go, take thy staff, and extend it once more over the sea, and thou shalt have a sign to strengthen thy wavering faith."

Moses obeyed. He took the rod of God in his hand, and he went down to the sea-beach, and he lifted the rod over the water. Then the sea divided, and he saw in the midst a black rock. And he went forward into the sea till he reached the rock, and then a voice said to him, "Smite with thy staff!" And he smote, and the rock clave asunder, and he saw at its foundations a little cavity, and in the cavity was a worm with a green leaf in its mouth. The worm lifted up its voice and cried thrice, "Praised be God, who doth not forget me, though I, a little worm, lie in loneliness here! Praised be God, who hath nourished and cherished even me!"

When the worm was silent, God said to Moses: "Thou seest that I do not fail to consider and provide for a little worm in a rock of which men know not, far in the depths of the sea; and shall I forget thy children, who know Me?"

Moses returned with shame to his home, comforted his wife and children, and went alone to the mountain where he was to die.[1]

And when he had gone up the mountain, he met three men

[1] Weil, pp. 188, 189.

who were digging a grave; and he asked them, "For whom do you dig this grave?"

They answered, "For a man whom God will call to be with Him in Paradise."

Moses asked permission to lend a hand to dig the grave of such a holy man. When it was completed, Moses asked, "Have you taken the measure of the deceased?"

"No; we have quite forgotten to do so. But he was of thy size; lie down in it, and God will reward thee, when we see if it be likely to suit."

Moses did so.[1]

The three men were the three angels Michael, Gabriel, and Sagsagel. The angel Michael had begun the grave, the angel Gabriel had spread the white napkin for the head, the angel Sagsagel that for the feet.

Then the angel Michael stood on one side of Moses, the angel Gabriel on the other side, the angel Sagsagel at the feet, and the Majesty of God appeared above his head.

And the Lord said to Moses, "Close thine eyelids." He obeyed.

Then the Lord said, "Press thy hand upon thy heart." And he did so.

Then God said, "Place thy feet in order." He did so.

Then the Lord God addressed the spirit of Moses, and said, "Holy soul, my daughter! For a hundred and twenty years hast thou inhabited this undefiled body of dust. But now thine hour is come; come forth and mount to Paradise!"

But the soul answered, trembling and with pain, "In this pure and undefiled body have I spent so many years, that I have learned to love it, and I have not the courage to desert it."

"My daughter, come forth! I will place thee in the highest heaven beneath the Cherubim and Seraphim who bear up My eternal throne."

Yet the soul doubted and quaked.

[1] Weil, p. 190.

Then God bent over the face of Moses, and kissed him. And the soul leaped up in joy, and went with the kiss of God to Paradise.

Then a sad cloud draped the heavens, and the winds wailed, "Who lives now on earth to fight against sin and error?"

And a voice answered, "Such a prophet never arose before."

And the Earth lamented, "I have lost the holy one!"

And Israel lamented, "We have lost the Shepherd!"

And the angels sang, "He is come in peace to the arms of God!"[1]

But the Mussulmans narrate the last scene differently.

They say that the Angel of Death stood over Moses, as he lay in the grave, and said, "Prophet of God, I must take thy soul."

"How wilt thou take it?"

"From thy mouth."

"Thou canst not, for my mouth hath spoken with God."

"Then from thine eyes."

"Thou canst not, for my eyes have seen the uncreated Light of God."

"Then from thy ears."

"Thou canst not, for my ears have heard the Voice of God."

"Then from thy hands."

"Thou canst not, for my hands have held the diamond tables, on which was engraven the Tora."

Then God bade the Angel of Death obtain from Rhidwan, the porter of Paradise, an apple from the garden, and give it to Moses to smell.

Moses took the apple out of the hand of the Angel of Death and smelt at it; and as he smelt thereat, the angel drew his soul forth at his nostrils.

None know where is the grave of Moses, save Gabriel, Michael, Israfiel, and Azrael, for they buried him and defend his grave to the Judgment Day.[2]

[1] Rabboth, fol. 302 b. [2] Weil, pp. 190, 191.

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling,
Or saw the train go forth—
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on Ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun;

Noiselessly as the spring-time
Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
The great procession swept.

* * * *

And had he not high honour—
The hill-side for a pall,
To lie in state, while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall;
And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land
To lay him in the grave?[1]

Once when the Persian Empire was at the summit of its power, an attempt was made to discover the body of Moses. A countless host of Persian soldiers was sent to search Mount Nebo. When they had reached the top of the mountain, they saw the sepulchre of Moses distinctly at the bottom. They hastened to reach the valley, and then they clearly distinguished the tomb of Moses at the summit. Thus whenever they were at the top, they saw it at the foot; and when they

[1] Lyra Anglicana, London, 1864, "The Burial of Moses."

were at the foot, it appeared at the top; so they were forced to abandon the prosecution of their search.[1]

The incident of the contention of Michael with Satan for the body of Moses mentioned by S. Jude is contained in the apocryphal "Assumption of Moses," now lost, but which has been quoted by Origen and other Fathers.

[1] Talmud, Tract. Sota, fol. 14 a.

XXXIII.

JOSHUA.

HITHERTO Israel had required a lawgiver, and they had been given one in Moses; now they needed a general, and they were provided with one in Joshua.

After the death of Moses and his brother Aaron, the children of Israel remained seven years in the wilderness, till the forty years were accomplished. Then God conferred on Joshua the function of prophet, and ordered him to lead the chosen people out of the desert and to attack the three cities of the giants.

Joshua was of the tribe of Joseph. He was the son of Nun, who was the son of Ephraim, who was the son of Joseph; and his mother was Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron.[1]

Before Joshua led the people of the Lord to the conquest of the Holy Land, Joshua sent three deputations into Canaan; of these the first proclaimed, "Let any one who will escape death, leave the country."

Then came the second deputation, and declared, "Let such people as will make an alliance with us, do so, and we will receive them."

Then came the third deputation, and cried, "Let those who persist in desiring war, prepare for it."

The result of these deputations was that one nation deserted the country, and settled in Africa, and that another nation

[1] Tabari, i. p. 396.

made terms with Israel. But thirty-one princes made ready for war.[1]

Joshua marched with his army against Jericho, took the city, and slew all the men therein; they were giants, and it took a hundred men to cut off the head of each giant.

After the capture of Jericho, Joshua went against Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Bethel. And as the people went up, the men of Ai came forth, and routed them, and they fled.[2]

Then Joshua rent his clothes, and fell on his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord, until eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust on their heads.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Get thee up. I am wroth with the people, for there is amongst them a sin which is not put away, and till that accursed thing is cast out, victory shall not attend their arms."

Now Joshua had ordered all the plunder of Jericho to be burnt with fire; but although it was heaped up, the fire would not consume it. Then he knew that the pile could not be complete, for the flames danced up, but would consume nothing, as though they waited for the entirety of their prey.

So Joshua made inquisition; and it was found that Achan (Adjezan in Arabic) had concealed a portion of the booty, which he desired to appropriate to his own use.

Then the booty taken by Achan was added to the heap, and instantly the flames roared up, and devoured the whole of the spoil.[3]

And when Ai was taken, Joshua said: "Enter into this town; for God has taken it from the giants, and has given it to you to be your inheritance. But when you pass through the gates, prostrate yourselves, with your heads in the dust, and adore God, saying, Hittaton, hittaton, which is by interpretation, Pardon our sins."

[1] Talmud of Jerusalem; Tract. Terumoth. Josh. vii. 1–5.
[3] Tabari, i. p. 402.

Some of those who entered Ai obeyed the voice of Joshua, and God gave them a possession in that city, and their posterity retain it to this day.

But there were some ungodly men who disobeyed the voice of Joshua, and when they passed through the gates, they did not prostrate themselves, but they raised their heads to heaven, and instead of saying "*hittaton*," as commanded, they said "*hintaton*," asking for corn.

Then the wrath of God was kindled against these men, and fire fell from heaven, and consumed all that had said *hintaton* in place of *hittaton*.[1]

Near Ai there were mountains, in which reigned two kings, Kuma and Djion (Sihon). These Amorites were wealthy. When Joshua attacked these kings, they asked to make a league with the people of Israel; and they were accepted, on condition that they believed in the religion of Moses.

Another of these mountain kingdoms was governed by a king called Barak (Adoni-bezek). He also sought by submission to escape ruin, and Joshua accepted him on the same terms as Kuma and Djion.

To the west were five cities, whose inhabitants were also Amorites. The kings of these cities made war on Joshua. Joshua routed them, and these five kings took refuge in a cave. Joshua ordered the cave to be closed with a stone, whilst he pursued the routed army. Then God sent hail from heaven, and each hailstone struck down and killed a man.[2]

On that day Joshua cried to the Lord, for the sun hasted to go down, and it was a Friday, and he feared that he should not have utterly discomfited the host before the Sabbath came in. Then the Lord lengthened the day one hour, so as to enable him to complete his victory.[3]

After the battle, it was announced to him that Barak and the other kings who had made submission to him had taken

[1] Koran, Sura ii. v. 55, 56.
[2] Tabari, p. 404.
[3] Tabari, p. 401.

advantage of the rising of the kings of the five cities to renounce their allegiance, and to return to the worship of false gods. Therefore Joshua prayed, "O Lord! because they have become unfaithful, take from them their riches, and make them poor, that they may become bondsmen; and that their king may fall into misery!"

Joshua was sick and unable to march against them. He was aged a hundred and twenty-eight years. He was a hundred years old when Moses died, and he governed Israel twenty-eight years.[1]

For the benefit of coin-collectors, the following information is inserted. "On the coins struck by Abraham are figured, on the obverse, an old man and an ass; on the reverse, a boy and a girl. On the coins of Joshua are, on one side a bull, on the other a unicorn. On those of David, on one side a staff wallet, on the other a tower. On those of Mordecai, on the obverse, sackcloth and ashes; and on the reverse, a crown."[2]

After Joshua, Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Othniel, the son of Kenaz,[3] Caleb's brother, governed Israel. They collected the people, and marched against Barak (Adoni-bezek)[4] and his people who had apostatized, and attacked them, and slew great numbers of them.

They took the king and cut off his thumbs. This Barak had, during his reign, treated seventy kings in like fashion, so that they were unable to pick up anything off the ground. And when Barak was feasting, these kings were brought before him. Then he cast bread among them, but they were unable to pick it up, having no thumbs, and they were obliged to stoop to the ground, and take it in their mouths like dogs; and this caused huge merriment to the king.[5]

[1] Tabari, p. 404.
[2] Berescheth Rabba.
[3] The Mussulmans say Khasqîl or Ezechiel.
[4] Judges i. 4.
[5] Tabari, i. p. 404.

XXXIV.

THE JUDGES.

If Joshua the first of the Judges, has, to a great extent, escaped the hands of legend manufacturers, the same may be said of his successors, Phinehas, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gibeon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Even Samson has not been surrounded by such a multitude of traditions as might have been expected.

The Mussulmans have little to say of him, and the Jewish legends are not numerous.

The Rabbi Samuel, son of Nahaman, said that Samson once took two mountains, one in each hand, and knocked them together, as a man will strike together two pebbles. The Rabbi Jehuda said that when the Spirit of the Lord rested on him, he strode in one stride from Zorah to Eshtaol. The Rabbi Nahaman added that his hair stood up, and one hair tinkled against another, so that the sound could be heard, like that of bells, from Zorah to Eshtaol.[1]

Abulfaraj says that Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron, after the death of Joshua, was commanded by an angel to put the manna, the rod, the tables of the covenant, and the five books of Moses in a brazen urn, seal it with lead, and conceal it in a cave, as the Israelites were too wicked to be entrusted with such a treasure.[2]

[1] Eisenmenger, i. p. 395.

[2] Hist. Dynast. p. 24.

XXXV.

SAMUEL.

GJALOUT (Goliath) was king of the Philistines. He was of the race of the ancient giants, the Adites and the Themudites, who were from fifty to a hundred cubits in height.

The children of Israel were greviously oppressed by him, and they besought God to send them a prophet who would reinstruct them in the law of Moses, and in the true religion. For thirty years they besought God, but no prophet was given to them. In the meanwhile, the Philistines oppressed them more and more, and whenever the Iṣraelites rose against them, they defeated the Israelites with great slaughter.

There died a man of the tribe of Levi, Rayyan (Elkanah), son of Elkama, who was descended from Aaron the brother of Moses. The elders of Israel hearing that he had died, leaving his wife pregnant, went to her and surrounded her with the greatest care and comforts.

There was amongst them a wise man named Hil (Eli), who was high-priest; to him they confided the care of the widow. In time she bore a son, who was named Ischmawil (Samuel).

Eli brought up the child Samuel in the temple, to the age of seven years, and he taught him the Pentateuch and the religion of Moses.

Samuel regarded Eli as his father, because he had been brought up by him, and he loved and reverenced him greatly.

One night when he was asleep, Gabriel came into the room and made a noise, so that Samuel awoke.

He saw no one, so he called to Eli, "Master! didst thou summon me?"

Eli replied, "No, my son, I did not summon thee."

Next night the same occurred; so also the third night.

Then Eli thought that God wished to give to Samuel the gift of prophecy; therefore he said, "My son, if thou art called again in the night, reply, Here am I; what wouldest Thou? I am in Thy hands."

Samuel did so. Then Gabriel appeared to him and communicated to him the message of God.

Samuel told Eli that the Lord had given him the gift of prophecy, by the mouth of His messenger Gabriel.

Then Eli was rejoiced, and he announced the glad tidings to all Israel.

Eli had two sons whom he had instructed in the art of offering sacrifice according to the law of Moses, but he had taught them nothing else. Eli himself moreover neglected to sacrifice, and he allowed his sons to live after their lusts, unrestrained by his paternal and priestly rebuke.

Therefore God spake to Samuel that He would punish Eli and his sons; but Samuel feared to show it to the high priest.

Then said Eli to him, "Has God given thee a message to me?"

And Samuel answered, "God has said, Why hast thou neglected to offer sacrifice, so that thy sons add thereto or detract therefrom? And why hast thou not constrained them? Because of this sin, I shall deliver thee into the hands of an enemy, who shall slay thy sons, and take the ark, and cause thee to perish also."[1]

Then Gjalout came, and made war against the children of Israel, and there was a great battle, and Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were slain, and the ark was taken; and Eli fell

[1] Tabari, i. c. lxxxvii.

backward from off his seat when he heard the news, and his neck brake, and he died.

In the ark, that now fell into the hands of the Philistines, were preserved the tables of the Law, which God had given to Moses, and a basin in which the angels washed and purified the hearts of the prophets, and the mitre and breastplate and pontifical robes of Aaron.

The Israelites had been accustomed, in times of peril, to produce the ark, and it had delivered them from evil by virtue of the sacred relics it contained. As for the Shekinah which rested upon it, and from which the ark took its name of Tabut-Shekinah, the Mussulman authors assure us it had the form of a leopard, which, whenever the ark was carried against the enemies of God's people, rose on its legs, and uttered so potent a roar, that the foes of Israel fell to the ground. These authors, however, derived this fable from Rabbinic writers.[1]

The king of the Philistines, having obtained possession of the ark, placed it in a draught-house, purposing thereby to express his hatred of the Jews, and his contempt for that which they regarded as most sacred.

But a terrible disease broke out among the Philistines, and the ark was sent from Gaza to another city. There the plague appeared immediately, and the Philistines were at length obliged to return the ark to the Israelites.

In the meantime, the Israelites, in consternation at the loss of their ark, gathered about Samuel, and besought him to consecrate a king for them, who might go forth to battle before them, and recover for them the ark.

Then Samuel said: "If I consecrate a king for you, will you not desert him, and refuse to obey him?"

But they all protested, "We will follow him wherever he leads, and we will obey all his commands."[2]

Then Schareh, who was surnamed Thalout (Saul), on account

[1] D'Herbelot, Bibl. Orient., s. v. Aschmouil.
[2] Koran, Sura ii. v. 247, 248.

of the greatness of his stature, was chosen by Samuel to be their king. He was poor, and by trade a water-carrier, and his ancestors had all been water-carriers.

Now the father of Saul had lost an ass, which had escaped into the desert. Saul went after it.

Then Samuel came to meet him and said to him: "Thou shalt reign as king over the people of Israel."

Saul replied: "O prophet of God! thou knowest that my tribe is the least among the tribes, and that I am the poorest among the members of my tribe."

Samuel said: "Nevertheless, God has ordered that so it should be."

Then he poured on his head the sacred oil which had been brought to Samuel out of heaven by Gabriel.

But some say that this oil belonged to Joseph the son of Jacob, and it was preserved by the prophets. When this oil was poured on Saul's head and face, it made his skin brilliant and pure.

Now the prophets all came out of the tribe of Levi, and the tribe of Benjamin was despised greatly by the Israelites. And when they heard that their king was from that tribe, and was a water-carrier, they were angry and exclaimed, "Why shall he reign over us? We are as worthy to reign as he!"[1]

Samuel answered, "God gives power to whom He wills."

The Israelites said, "Show us a sign."

Samuel brought the sacred oil forth, and it boiled in the presence of Saul.[2]

But that did not suffice them. Then they asked another sign; and Samuel said, "The ark shall return."

And they lifted up their eyes, and lo! the ark was coming to them attached to the tails of two cows, and angels guided the cows.[3]

[1] Koran, Sura ii. v. 248.
[2] D'Herbelot, Bib. Orientale, t. i. p. 263.
[3] Tabari, i. p. 417.

Then the children of Israel doubted no longer, but accepted Saul as their king.

Then said Samuël to the people: "The God of your fathers has sent me unto you, to promise you victory over the Philistines, and deliverance from your bondage, if you will turn and leave your evil ways."

"What shall we do," asked one of the elders, "that we may obtain the favour of God?"

Samuel answered, "Ye must pray to God alone, and offer no sacrifices to idols, nor eat the flesh of swine, or blood; neither must you eat anything which is not slaughtered in the name of the Most High. Ye must assist one another, honour your parents, entreat your wives with kindness, and support the widows, orphans, and poor. Ye shall believe in the prophets who have gone before me, especially in Abraham, for whom God turned a fiery pile into a pleasure garden; in Ishmael, whose neck God made as a flint-stone, and for whom He opened a fountain in the stony desert; and in Moses, who, with his staff, opened twelve clay paths through the sea. Also ye shall believe in the prophets who shall follow after me, especially in Isa Ibn Mariam (Jesus, Son of Mary), the Spirit of God, and in Mohammed Ibn Abd-allah."

"And who is this Isa?" asked one of the elders of Israel.

"Isa," pursued Samuel, "is the prophet foretold in the Tora as the Word of God. His mother Mariam (Mary) shall conceive him by the will of God, and by a breath of the angel Gabriel. In his mother's womb will he praise the almighty power of God, and testify to the immaculate purity of his mother; afterwards will he heal the sick and crippled, will quicken the dead, and will create living birds out of clay.[1] His godless cotemporaries will deal cruelly with him, and will crucify him; but God will deceive their eyes and will let

[1] This incident, from the apocryphal gospels of the childhood of Christ, shall be related in the Legendary Lives of New Testament Characters.

another die in his room, and he will be carried up into heaven like the prophet Idris (Enoch)."

"And Mohammed," asked the same Israëlite, "who is he? His name sounds strange in our ears, never have we heard that name before."

"Mohammed," answered Samuel, "does not belong to the race of Israel; he will descend from the seed of Ishmael, and he will be the last and greatest of the prophets, before whom Moses and Christ will bend at the Resurrection Day. His name, which signifies the Much Praised, is prophetic of the laud and honour he will receive from all creatures on earth, and all the angels in heaven. The miracles he will work are numberless, so that a man's life is not long enough to relate them all. I shall be able to tell you only the events of a single night.

"One fearful night of tempest, in which neither cock will crow nor dog bark, Mohammed shall be aroused from sleep by Gabriel, who shall appear to him in the shape he has when he appears before God, with seven hundred wings streaming with light; between each a space such as a fleet-footed horse could scarce traverse in five hundred years. Gabriel will lead the prophet forth into the open air, where the wondrous horse Borak will be ready. That is the horse on which Abraham mounted when he made his pilgrimages from Syria to Mecca. This horse has two wings as an eagle, and feet like a dromedary, and a body like a costly gem, shining like the sun, and a head like the fairest maiden. On this wondrous beast, whose brow bears the inscription, 'There is no God save God, and Mohammed is his prophet,' he will mount and ride, first to Medina, then to Sinai, thence to Bethlehem, and finally to Jerusalem, to view the holy places, and at them to offer up his prayers. From Jerusalem he will ascend on a golden ladder, with rungs of rubies, emeralds, and jacinths, into the seventh heaven, where he will be instructed in all the mysteries of the creation, and the governance of the world. He will see the blessed in all their joy, in Paradise, and the sinners, in all their

pain, in Hell. There will he see many pasturing wild cattle in unfruitful fields. These are they who in the time of life used the gifts of God without giving to those in need. Others will he see running about, and carrying in one hand fresh, and in the other putrid, meat, and as often as they attempt to taste the former, a fiery rod will smite them on the hand, till they devour the latter. This is the punishment of those who have violated marriage, and have preferred forbidden pleasures. Others have a swollen body, swelling daily more and more; these are the fraudulent and avaricious. Others have their tongues and lips fastened together with iron clamps; these are the slanderers and backbiters. Between Paradise and Hell sits Adam, laughing with joy when the gate of Heaven opens to receive one of his sons, and he hears the songs and shouts of the blessed; weeping with self-reproach when the gate of Hell uncloses to take in one of his descendants, and he hears the sobbing of the damned. On this night will Mohammed also see, besides Gabriel, the other angels, who have each seventy thousand heads, and in each head seventy thousand faces, and in each face seventy thousand mouths, and in each mouth seventy thousand tongues, wherewith they cease not day or night to praise God in seventy thousand diverse languages. He will also see the angel of atonement, who is half fire, half ice; also the angel who watches the treasure of fire with gloomy countenance and flashing eyes; also the angel of death, with a great writing-table in his hand, whereon are inscribed many names, and from which at every instant he wipes off several hundreds; finally, the angel who guards the waters, and weighs in great scales the water allotted to each spring and well, and brook and river; and the angel who bears up the throne of God on his shoulders, and has a horn in his mouth, wherewith he will blow the blast that is to wake the dead. Moreover, the prophet will be conducted through many seas of light near to the throne itself, which is so great that the whole world will be beside it as a link in a coat of mail dropped in

the desert. What will be further revealed to him," answered Samuel, "is unknown to me; this only I know, that, after having contemplated the Majesty of God a bowshot off, he will descend the ladder precipitately, and, mounting Borak, will return to Mecca. Now the whole of this journey, his sojourn in Medina, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and the seventh heaven, will occupy so little time, that a water-pitcher which he upset as he left the house in Mecca will not have run all its water out by his return."

The assembled Israelites listened to Samuel, and when he was silent, they cried with one voice, "We believe in God and in all the past prophets, and in all those who are yet for to come. Pray for us that we may escape the tyranny of Gjalout (Goliath)."

Thus Saul was chosen king of Israel, and Samuel was prophet to the people of God.[1]

[1] Weil, pp. 193–8.

XXXVI.

SAUL.

I. WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES.—GOLIATH SLAIN.

SAMUEL ordered Thalout (Saul) to make war upon Gjalout (Goliath), and to assemble the fighting men of the tribes of Israel. Saul summoned all the men, and they numbered eighty thousand. Samuel gave Saul a suit of mail, and said to him, "He who can wear this coat with ease will decide the war, and Goliath will perish by his hand."

Saul started with his army; his way led through a desert, a day's journey across; and it was very hot weather. On the other side of the desert was a broad river, between Jordan and Palestine, and the children of Israel had to pass this river to reach the army of Goliath. Saul thought that now he would prove his soldiers, for Samuel had bidden him take into battle only as many men as he could rely upon.

The men were faint with heat and thirst as they reached the river of Palestine, and Saul said, "He who drinks of this water shall not come with me, but he who drinks not thereof shall follow after me."[1] For he would not have them slake their thirst till they reached Jordan.[2]

But, according to another version of the story, the men were fainting in the wilderness, and murmured against Saul. Then Samuel prayed, and God brought a water-spring out of

[1] Koran, Sura ii. v. 250.

[2] Tabari, i. p. 418.

the dry, stony ground, and made standing water in the desert, fresh as snow, sweet as honey, and white as milk.[1]

Samuel spake to the soldiers, and said, "Ye have sinned against your king and against God, by murmuring. Therefore refuse to drink of this water except in the hollow of your hand, and so expiate your fault."[2]

Samuel's words were disregarded. Only three hundred and thirteen men were found who had sufficient control over themselves not to drink except slightly out of the hollow of their hand; but these felt their thirst quenched, whereas those who had lain down and lapped were still parched with thirst.

Saul and his army came before that of Goliath; then said the majority of those who had lain down and lapped, "We have no strength to-day to stand against the Philistines." So Saul dismissed them to their homes, to the number of seventy-six thousand men; he had still with him four thousand men. Next day, when they saw the array of the Philistines, and the gigantic stature of their king, and their harness flashing in the sun, the hearts of more of the warriors failed, and they would not follow Saul into battle, but said, "We have no strength to-day to stand against the Philistines!"

So Saul dismissed three thousand six hundred men, and there remained to him only three hundred and thirteen, the same number as those who on the day of Bedr remained with the prophet Mohammed.

Then said Saul, "God is favourable to us!" and he advanced, and set his army in array against Goliath. And he prayed, saying, "Grant us, O Lord, perseverance."[3]

However, God sent an order by Samuel, saying, "Go not into battle this day, for the man who is to slay Goliath is not here; he is Daud (David), son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz; he is a little man, with grey eyes, and little hair, timid

[1] Perhaps the passage in Psalm cvii. 35 may refer to this miracle, unrecorded in Holy Scripture.

[2] Weil, pp. 200, 201.

[3] Koran, Sura ii. v. 251.

of heart, and slender of body. By this shalt thou know him: when thou placest the horn upon his head, the oil will overflow and boil."

Then Samuel went to Jesse, and said to him, "Amongst thy sons there is one who will slay Goliath."

Jesse said, "I have eleven sons, men stalwart and comely."

Samuel placed the horn on their heads, but the oil was not to be seen.

Then God gave him a vision, and he said to him, "Look not at the beauty and strength of these men, but on the purity of their hearts and their fear of God."

Samuel said to Jesse, "God says thou art a liar, and He says thou hast another son besides these."

Jesse answered, "It is true; but he is diminutive in stature, and I am ashamed to bring him into the company of men; I make him tend sheep; he is somewhere with the flock to-day."

Samuel went to the place, and it was a valley into which a torrent fell. He saw David drawing the sheep out of the torrent by twos. Samuel said, "Certainly this is the man I seek." He placed the horn on his head, and the oil overflowed.

Now Goliath, seeing the small number of the children of Israel, despised them, and scorned to fight them. He sent a messenger to Saul, saying, "Thou hast come out to fight against me with this handful, and I disdain to attack thee with my large army. If thou wilt, come forth that we may fight each other, or send any one out of the army, whom thou wilt, to fight with me."

None in Saul's army would venture against the giant, and Saul was himself afraid. He produced the shirt of mail Samuel had given him, and he tried it upon each of his soldiers in turn; but it was too short for one, too long for another, too tight for a third, and too loose for a fourth.

Now the father of David had come with his eleven sons into the host; but he had left David, because he was young and small of stature, to keep the sheep; and he had bidden him,

from time to time, bring him supplies of food. David came with the provisions. He was dressed in a woollen shirt, and he bore in his hand a staff, and a pouch attached to his waist.

As he passed over a pebbly strip of soil, a stone cried to him, "Pick me up, and take me with thee." He stooped and picked up the stone, and placed it in his pouch. And when he had taken a few paces, another stone cried to him, "Pick me up, and take me with thee." He did so. And a third stone cried in like manner, and was in like manner taken by David. The first stone was that wherewith Abraham had driven away Satan, when he sought to dissuade the patriarch from offering up his son; and the second stone was that on which the foot of Gabriel rested when he opened the fountain in the desert for Hagar and Ishmael; and the third stone was that wherewith Jacob strove against the angel whom his brother Esau had sent against him.[1] But, according to another account, the first was the stone which Moses cast against the enemies of God, the second was that cast by Aaron, the third was destined to cause the death of Goliath.[2] When David came into the army, Saul had finished trying on the suit of mail upon the soldiers, and he said, "It fits none of them." Then he spied David, and he said, "Young man, let me place this shirt of mail on thee." Then he cast it over him, and it fitted him exactly.

Saul said, "Wilt thou fight Goliath?"

David answered, "I will do so."

Saul said, "With what horse and arms wilt thou go?"

David answered, "I will have no horse and no arms, save these stones of the brook."

David was feeble in body, he had grey eyes, was short, yellow-complexioned, thin-faced, and had red hair.[3]

Saul had little hope that David would overcome the giant, but he thought his example might shame and stimulate others, therefore he let him go.

[1] Weil, p. 203. [2] Tabari, i. p. 421. [3] Ibid.

Now when Goliath came forth and defied the army of Israel, David went to meet him, wearing only his linen shirt, and belt, and pouch, and he had his shepherd's staff in his hand.

Then cried Goliath, "Who art thou, that comest out to meet me?"

Then David replied, "I am come out to fight with thee."

Goliath said, "Go back, petty fool, and play with children of thine own age. I despise thee; thou art unarmed."

"And I despise thee, dog of a Philistine!" cried the stripling; "thou deservest to be dealt with as men deal with dogs,—pelting them with stones till they turn tail."

Then Goliath was in a rage, and he lifted his spear against David; but David hasted and loosed his belt, and laid in it one of the stones, and slung it; and the wind caught the helmet of Goliath, and lifted it in the air above his head, and the stone struck him on the brow, and sank in, and crushed all his skull, and strewed his brains all over the horse he rode; then the giant fell out of his saddle, and died.

Then again David placed the second stone in his sling, and he cast it, and it smote the right wing of the army of the Philistines; then he cast the third stone, and it smote the left wing, and the host of the Philistines fled before him.[1]

2. SAUL'S JEALOUSY OF DAVID.

Saul had promised his daughter to the man who should slay Goliath. When the Philistines had been routed, Saul told Samuel all that had taken place; and the prophet exhorted the king to fulfil his promise, and to give to David his daughter in marriage.

To this Saul agreed, and he gave David his ring, and made him manager of all his affairs, and he exalted him to be his son-in-law.

[1] Tabari, i. p. 422; Weil, pp. 202–4; D'Herbelot, i. p. 362.

Several years passed, and Saul became envious of David, whose praise was in everybody's mouth.

He sent David into the wars, in hopes of his there meeting his death; but it was all in vain. Then he spoke to his daughter Michal, that she should introduce him into her husband's chamber, at night, that he might slay David with his own hand.

Michal told David her father's resolution, with many tears; but David bade her be comforted. "For," said he, "the God of my fathers, who preserved Abraham and Moses from the hands of the executioner, will deliver me from thy father. But do as he bade thee, open the door at night, and fear not for me."

Then David went into his smithy and wrought a suit of chain mail. He was the inventor of chain-armour. And he had received from God the power of moulding iron, like wax, in his fingers, without fire and without hammer.

Now he fashioned for himself a whole suit of chain mail; it was so thin that it was like gossamer, and it fitted to his body like his skin, and it was impenetrable to the thrust of every weapon.

David put upon him his armour, and lay down in his bed. He slept, but was awakened at midnight by the knife of Saul stabbing at him as he lay. He sprang up, struck the weapon from the hands of his father-in-law, and thrust him forth out of the house.[1]

After this, Saul came to Michal and said, "He was not asleep, or I certainly would have slain him. Admit me again into his chamber at night."

Michal went to David and told him all, with many tears.

Then said David, "I must escape from my house, for my life is not in security here. But do thou fill a leather bottle with wine, and lay it in my bed."

Michal did so; she took a large skin of wine and placed it

[1] Weil, pp. 205–8.

in the bed, and drew the cover over it. But David fled away to Hebron.

And in the night came Saul, and he felt the clothes, and he thought it was David in the bed, so he stabbed at him with his knife, and the wine ran out in the bed. Then Saul smelt it, and he said, "How much wine the fellow drank for his supper!"[1]

But when he found that David had escaped him once more, he was wroth, and he gathered men together, and pursued after him; in his anger, moreover, he sought to kill Michal, but she fled away and concealed herself.

Saul pursued David in the mountains, but David knew all the caves and lurking-places, and Saul was unable to catch him. One night, David crept into the camp and thrust four arrows, inscribed with his name, into the ground, round the head of Saul. When Saul awoke, he saw these arrows, and he said, "David has been here; he might have slain me had he willed it."

During the day, Saul came upon his enemy in a narrow valley; he was mounted, and he pursued David, who was on foot. David fled as fast as he could run, and managed to reach a cave a few moments before Saul could reach it. Then God sent a spider, which spun a web over the mouth of the cave; and Saul saw it and passed on, saying, "Certainly David cannot have entered in there, or the web would be torn."[2]

One night, Saul and his soldiers lodged in a cavern. And David was there, but they knew it not. In the night David carried off the sword and banner and seal-ring of the king, and he went forth out of the cave, for it had two openings. In the morning, when Saul prepared to continue his search, he saw him on a mountain opposite the mouth of the cave, and

[1] Tabari, i. p. 423. The same story is told of the escape of S. Felix of Nola, in the Decian persecution.
[2] Ibid., p. 429.

David had girded the royal sword to his side, and brandished the flag, and held forth his finger that all might note that he had on it the king's signet.[1]

Then Saul said, "His heart is better than mine;" and he was reconciled with David, and he bade him return with him and live at peace. And he did so.

3. THE DEATH OF SAUL.

Now when Saul had gone forth against David, the wise men of Israel had gathered themselves together, and had remonstrated with him. But Saul was wroth at this interference, and he slew them all, and there escaped none of them save one wise woman, whom his vizir spared. This vizir was a good man, and he took the woman into his own house, and she lived with his family.

Some time after that, Saul had a dream, and in his dream he was reproached for having slain the wise men. And when he awoke he was full of remorse, and he went to his vizir and said, "It repents me that I have put to death all the wise men of my realm; is there none remaining of whom I might ask counsel how I could expiate my crime?"

Then the vizir answered, "There remains but one, and that is a woman."

Saul said, "Bring her hither before me."

Now, when the wise woman was come before Saul, the king was troubled in mind, and he said, "Show me how I can make atonement for the great sin that I have committed."

The woman answered, "Lead me to the tomb of a prophet; I will pray, and may be God will suffer him to speak."

They went to the tomb of Samuel, and the woman prayed.

Then Samuel spake out of his sepulchre, and said, "Let his expiation be this: He shall go down, he and his sons, to the city of Giants, and they shall fall there."

[1] Weil, p. 207.

Saul had twelve sons. He called them to him and said to them all the words of Samuel. They then answered, "We are ready, let us go down."

So they went to the city of Giants, and fought against it, and fell there, all in one day.

[1] Tabari, i. p. 424.

XXXVII.

DAVID.

DAVID says of himself, "*Behold, I was shapen in wickedness; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*"[1] The Rabbis explain this passage by narrating the circumstances of the conception of David, which I shall give in Latin. The mother of David they say was named Nitzeneth. "Dixerunt Rabbini nostri beatæ memoriæ, quod Isai (Jesse) habebat ancillam, eamque sollicitabat ad turpia; quæ, cum esset pudica et fidelis uxori Isai, eidem retulit; quæ seipsam aptavit (loco ancillæ) et congressa est cum Isai, ex quo concubitu egressus est David. Et quia Isai intentio fuerat in ancillam, quamquam res aliter evenerat, idcirco dixit David,—super eum sit pax: Ecce in iniquitate formatus sum, et peccato calefecit me mater mea."[2]

On this account, Jesse, having discovered the deception, lightly esteemed his son David, and sent him to keep sheep, and made him as a servant to his brethren. And to this David refers when he says, "*The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner;*"[3] for, from being the despised brother, put to menial work, he was exalted before his brethren to be king over Israel.

When David was born he would have died immediately, had not Adam, when he saw his posterity marshalled before him, taken compassion on David, and given him seventy years.[4]

[1] Ps. li. 5.
[2] Midrash, fol. 204, col. 1
[3] Ps. cxviii. 22.
[4] See the story in the Legends of Adam.

However, David was without a soul for the first fourteen years of his life, and was so regarded by God, as he was uncircumcised;[1] but other Rabbinic writers say that he was born circumcised.

The Jewish authors relate, as do the Mussulman historians, that David had red hair. In Jalkut (1 Sam. xvi. 12) it is said, "Samuel sent, and made David come before him, and he had red hair;"[2] and again in Bereschith Rabba, 'When Samuel saw that David had red hair, he feared and said, He will shed blood as did Esau. But the ever-blessed God said, This man will shed it with unimpassioned eyes—this did not Esau. Esau slew out of his own caprice, but this man will execute those sentenced to death by the Sanhedrim."

David was very small, but when Samuel poured the oil upon his head and anointed him, he grew rapidly, and was soon as tall as was Saul. And this the commentators conclude from the fact of Saul having put his armour upon David, and it fitted him. Now Saul was a head and shoulders taller than any man in Israel; therefore David must have started to equal height since his anointing.[3]

David was gifted with the evil eye, and was able to give the leprosy by turning a malignant glance upon any man. "When it is written, '*The Philistine cursed David by his gods*,'[4] David looked at him with the evil eye. For whoever was looked upon by him with the evil eye became leprous, as Joab knew to his cost, for after David had cast the evil glance on him, it is said, '*Let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper.*'[5]

"The same befell the Philistine when he cursed David. David then threw on him the malignant glance, and fixed it on his brow, that he might at once become leprous; and at the same moment the stone and the leprosy struck him."[6]

[1] Zohar, in Bartolocci, i. fol. 85, col. 2.
[2] Jalkut, fol. 32, col. 2 (Parasch. 2, numb. 134).
[3] Ibid. (Parasch. 2, numb. 127).
[4] 1 Sam. xvii. 43.
[5] 2 Sam. iii. 29.
[6] Zohar, in Bartolocci, i. fol. 99, col. 1.

But David was himself afflicted for six months with this loathsome malady, and it is in reference to this that he says, "*Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" During this period, he was cast out and separated from the elders of the people, and the Divinity withdrew from him.[1] And this explains the discrepancy apparent in the account of the number of years he reigned. It is said that he reigned over Israel forty years,[2] but he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty and three in Jerusalem. In the Second Book of Samuel, however, it is said, he reigned in Hebron seven years and six months;[3] though the statement that he reigned only forty years in all, that is, thirty-three in Jerusalem, is repeated. Consequently, these six months do not count, the reason being that David was at that time afflicted with the disorder, and cut off from society, and reputed as one dead.[4]

The Rabbis suppose that David sinned in cutting off the skirt of Saul's robe;[5] and they say that he expiated this fault in his old age, by finding no warmth in his clothes, wherewith he wrapped himself.[6] For it is said, "*King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat.*"[7]

To David is attributed by the Rabbi Solomon the power of calling down the rain, the hail, and the tempest, in vengeance upon his enemies. "Our Rabbis," says he, "say that these things were formerly stored in heaven, but David came and made them to descend on the earth: for they are means of vengeance, and it is not fitting that they should be garnered in the Treasury of God."[8] But the rain and hail fell at the Deluge, in Egypt, and on the Amorites; therefore the signification to be attributed to this opinion of the Rabbis probably is,

[1] Talmud, Tract. Sanhedrim, fol. 107.
[2] 1 Kings ii. 11.
[3] 2 Sam. v. 5.
[4] Bartolocci, i. f. 100.
[5] 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.
[6] Bartolocci, i. f. 122, col. 1.
[7] 1 Kings i. 1.
[8] Bartolocci, i. f. 122, col. 2.

that David was the first to be able to call them down by his prayer.

David had a lute which he hung up above his head in the bed, and the openings of the lute were turned towards the north, and when the cool night air whispered in the room towards dawn it stirred the strings of the lute, which gave forth such sweet and resonant notes, that David was aroused from his sleep early, before daybreak, that he might occupy himself in the study of the Law. And it is to this that he refers when he cries in his Psalm, "*Awake, lute and harp: I myself will awake right early.*"[1]

When Absalom was slain, David saw Scheol (Hell) opened, and his son tormented, for his rebellion, in the lowest depths. The sight was so distressing to the king, that he wrapped his mantle about his face and cried, "*O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*" Here it is to be noted that David called Absalom either by name or by his relationship seven times. Now in Hell there are seven mansions, and as each cry escaped the father's heart, Absalom was released from one of these divisions of the Pit; and he thus effected his escape from Gehenna through the love of his father, which drew him up out of misery.[2]

David was very desirous to build a temple to the Lord, but God would not suffer him to do so, as he was a man of blood. This is the reason why he so desired to erect a temple. When he was young, and pastured his father's sheep, he came one day upon a rhinoceros (unicorn) asleep, and he did not know that it was a rhinoceros, but thought it was a mountain, so he drove his flock up its back, and fed them on the grass which grew thereon. But presently the rhinoceros awoke, and stood up, and then David's head touched the sky. He was filled with terror, and he vowed that, if God would save his life and

[1] Ps. lvii. 9; Bartolocci, i. fol. 125, col. 2.
[2] Talmud, Tract. Sota, fol. 10 b.

bring him safely to the ground again, he would build to the Lord a temple of the dimensions of the horn of the beast, an hundred cubits. The Talmudists are not agreed as to whether this was the height, or the breadth, of the horn; however, the vow was heard, and the Lord sent a lion against the rhinoceros; and when the unicorn saw the lion, he lay down, and David descended his back, along with his sheep, as fast as possible; but when he saw the lion, his spirit failed him again. However he took the lion by the beard, and smote, and slew him. This adventure the Psalmist recalls when he says, "*Save me from the lion's mouth: Thou hast heard me also from among the horns of the unicorns;*"[1] and to his vow he alludes in Psalm cxxxii., "*Lord, remember David, and all his trouble: how he sware unto the Lord, and vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob.*"[2]

One day David was hunting in the wilderness. Then came Satan, in the form of a stag, and David shot an arrow at him, but could not kill him. This astonished him, for on one occasion, in strife with the Philistines, he had transfixed eight hundred men with one arrow.[3] Then he chased the deer, and it ran before him into the Philistine land. Now when Ishbi-benob, who was of the sons of the giant, knew this, he said, "David has slain my brother Goliath; now he is in my power!" and he came upon him and chained him, and cast him down, and laid a wine-press upon him, that he might crush him, and squeeze all the blood out of him. But God softened the earth beneath him, so that it yielded to his body, and he was uninjured; as he says in the Psalms, "*Thou shalt make room enough under me for to go.*"[4] And as David lay under the press, he saw a dove fly by, and he said, "*Oh that I had wings as a dove, that I might flee away, and be at rest;*"[5] and he alludes to his being among the pots, and noting the wings of the dove as silver, in another Psalm.[6]

[1] Ps. xxii. 21.
[2] Midrash Tillim, fol. 21, col. 2.
[3] Eisenmenger, i p. 409.
[4] Ps. xviii. 36[1]
[5] Ps. lv. 6.
[6] Ps. lxviii. 13.

Now Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, heard the plaining of the dove, which had seen the trouble of the king, and came into Jerusalem in grief thereat. Then Abishai went to the chamber of David to search for him, but he was not there. Then he knew that the king must be in danger, and the only means of reaching him with speed was to mount the royal mule, which was fleet as the wind; but this Abishai did not venture to do without advice, for he remembered the words of the Mischna, "Thou shalt not ride the king's horse, nor mount his throne, nor grasp his sceptre." But as the danger was pressing, Abishai went to the school, and consulted the doctors of the Law, who said, "In an emergency all things are lawful." Then he mounted the mule of King David, and rode into the desert, and the earth flew under him, and he reached the house of Ishbi-benob. Now the mother of Ishbi-benob—her name was Orpha—sat without the door, spinning. And when she saw Abishai galloping up, she brake her thread and flung the spindle at him, with intent to strike him dead. But the spindle fell short of him. So Orpha cried to him, "Give me my spindle, boy." Abishai stooped and picked it up, and cast it at her with all his force, and it struck her on the brow, and broke her skull, and she fell back and died.

Then, when Ishbi-benob saw what was done, he said, "These two men will be too much for me!" so he drew David from under the winepress, and flung him high into the air, and set his lance in the ground, that David might fall upon it, and be transfixed. But Abishai cried the Sacred Name, and David was arrested in his fall, and hung between heaven and earth, and gradually was let down, not on the spear, but at a distance. Then Abishai and David slew Ishbi-benob.[1]

When David's life was run out, the Angel of Death came to fetch his soul. But David spent all his time in reading the Law. The angel stood before him, and watched that his lips should cease moving, for he might not interrupt him in this

[1] Talmud, Tract. Sanhedrim, fol. 95, col. 1.

sacred work. But David made no pause. Then the angel went into the garden which was behind the house, and shook violently one of the trees. David heard the noise, and turned his head, and saw that the branches of one of his trees were violently agitated, but no leaf stirred on the other trees; so he closed the book of the Law, and went into his garden, and set a ladder against the tree and ascended into it, that he might see what was agitating the leaves. Then the angel withdrew the ladder, but David knew it not; so he fell and broke his neck, and died. It was the Sabbath day. Then Solomon doubted what he should do, for the body of his father was exposed to the sun, and to the dogs; and he did not venture to remove it, lest he should profane the Sabbath; so he sent to the Rabbis, and said, "My father is dead, and exposed to the sun, and to be devoured by dogs; what shall I do?"

They answered, "Cast the body of a beast before the dogs, and place bread or a boy upon thy father, and bury him."[1]

David had such a beautiful voice, that, when he sang the praises of God, the birds came from all quarters and surrounded him, listening to his strains. The mountains even and the hills were moved at his notes.[2] He could sing with a voice as loud as the most deafening peal of thunder, or warble as sweetly as the tuneful nightingale.

He divided his time, say the Mussulmans, into three parts. One day he occupied himself in the affairs of his kingdom, the second day he devoted to the service of God, and the third day he gave up to the society of his wives.

As he was going home from prayer, one day, he heard two of his servants discussing him and comparing him with Abraham.

"Was not Abraham saved from a fiery furnace?" asked one.

"Did not David slay the giant Goliath?" asked the other.

"But what has David done that will compare with the obedience of Abraham, who was ready to offer his only son to God?" asked the first.

[1] Tract. Sabbath, fol. 30, col. 2. [2] Tabari, i. p. 426; Weil, p. 208.

When David reached home, he fell down before God and prayed: "Lord! Thou, who didst give to Abraham a trial of his obedience in the pyre, grant that an opportunity may be afforded me of proving before all the people how great also is mine."[1]

But others relate this differently. They say that David besought the Lord to endue him with the spirit of prophecy. Then God answered, "When I give great gifts, he who receives them must suffer great trials. I proved Abraham by the fire, and by the sacrifice of one son, and separation from others; Jacob by his children; Joseph by the well and the prison; Moses by Pharaoh; Job by the worms. I afflicted all these, but thee have I not afflicted." But David said, "O Lord, prove me and try me also, that I may obtain the same degree of celebrity as they."[2]

One day, as David sang psalms before God and the congregation, a beautiful bird appeared at the window, and it attracted his whole attention, so that he could scarcely sing. David concluded his recitation of the psalms earlier than usual, and went in pursuit of the bird, which led him from bush to bush, and from tree to tree, till it suddenly disappeared near a secluded lake. Now this bird was Eblis, and he came to tempt David into evil.

When the bird vanished, David saw in the water a beautiful woman, bathing, and when she stood up, her hair covered her whole person.

David hid behind the bushes, that he might not startle her, till she was dressed; then he stood forth, and asked her her name.

"My name," said she, "is Bathsheba,[3] daughter of Joshua, and wife of Uriah, son of Hanan, who is with the army."[4]

[1] Weil, p. 207. [2] Tabari, p. 428.

[3] The Arabs call her Saga.

[4] The story in the Talmud is almost the same, with this difference: Bathsheba was washing herself behind a beehive, then the beautiful bird perched on the hive, and David shot an arrow at it and broke the hive, and exposed

Then David departed, but his heart was inflamed with love, and he sent a message to Joab, the captain of his host, to set Uriah before the ark in every battle. Now those who went before the ark must conquer or fall. Three times Uriah came out of battle victorious, but the fourth time he was killed.

Then David took Uriah's wife to his own house and made her his own wife. And she consented upon the condition that should she bear him a son, that son was to succeed him in the kingdom. Now David had, before he married her, ninety-nine wives. The day after his marriage, Michael and Gabriel appeared before him in human form, as he was in his court, and Gabriel said to him: "This fellow here possesses ninety and nine sheep, but I have only one, and that I love, and cherish in my bosom. This man claims my little ewe lamb, and will take it from me, and, if I will not give it him, he says that he will slay me; and take my lamb from me by force."

Then David's anger was kindled against Michael, and he said, "Thou who hast so many sheep, wherefore lustest thou after the poor man's ewe lamb? Thou hast an evil heart and an insatiable spirit."

Then Michael exclaimed, "Thou hast given judgment against thyself; what thou rebukest in this man, thou hast allowed thyself to do!"[1]

And David knew that God had sent His angels to rebuke him, and he fell upon his face to the ground. But, some say, he drew his sword and rushed upon Michael: then Gabriel held him back, and said, "Thou didst ask to be tried; now thou hast fallen under the temptation."[2]

Then the angels vanished, and David fell to the ground, tore off his purple robe, cast aside his golden crown, and wept for

Bathsheba to view. In the Rabbinic tale, David had asked for the gift of prophecy, and God told him he must be tried. This he agreed to, and the temptation to adultery was that sent him. (Talmud, Tract. Sanhedrim, fol. 107, col. 2; Jalkut, fol. 22, col. 2.)

[1] Koran, Sura xxxviii. [2] Weil, pp. 212, 213.

forty days and forty nights. And his tears flowed in such abundance, that every now and then he plunged a cup into them and drank it off.

At the expiration of forty days Gabriel came to him, and said, "The Lord salutes thee!" But David felt this was an additional reproach, and he wept still more. It is said that during the ensuing forty days and nights David shed more tears than Adam and all his descendants had, and will, shed from the day of the Fall to the day of the Resurrection.

Then God sent Gabriel to him again, and Gabriel said, "The Lord salutes thee!" But David lifted his tearful face and said, "O Gabriel, what will Uriah say to me on the day of the general Resurrection?"

Gabriel answered, "The Lord will give him so great an inheritance in Paradise, that he will not have the heart to reproach thee."

Then David knew that he was pardoned, and he rejoiced greatly. But he never forgot his sins. He wrote them on the palm of his hand, that he might have them always before him; therefore he says, "My shame is ever before mine eyes."

Nevertheless David's heart was lifted up with pride, when he considered that he was a king, a prophet, and a great general. And one day he said to Nathan, "I think I am perfect, I have everything."

"Not so," answered Nathan, "thou exercisest no handicraft."

Then David was ashamed, and he asked God to teach him a craft; and God made him skilful in fabricating coats of mail of rings twined together; his trade therefore was that of an armourer, and his disgrace was wiped away.

After his judgment between the two angels, David had no confidence in giving sentence in cases pleaded before him; therefore God sent him, by the hand of Gabriel, a reed of iron and a little bell, and the angel said to him, "God is pleased with thy humility, and He has sent thee this reed and this bell

to assist thee in giving judgment. Place this reed in thy judgment-hall, and hang up the bell in the middle, and place the accuser on one side, and the accused on the other, and give sentence in favour of him who makes the bell to tinkle when he touches the reed."

David was highly pleased with this gift, and he gave such righteous judgment, that men feared, throughout the land, to do wrong to one another.

One day, two men came before David, and one said, "I left a goodly pearl in the charge of this man, and when I asked for it again, he denied it me."

But the other said, "I have returned it to him."

Then David bade each lay his hand on the reed, but the bell gave the same indication for both. Then David thought, "They both speak the truth, and yet that cannot be; the gift of God must err."

Then he bade the men try again, and the result was the same. However, he observed that the defendant, when he went up to the reed to lay his hand upon it, gave his walking staff to the plaintiff to hold, and this he did each time, so that David's suspicion was awakened, and he took the staff, and examined it, and found that it was hollow, and the stolen pearl was concealed in the handle. Thus the bell had given right judgment, for when the accused touched the reed, he had returned the pearl into the hand of the accuser; but David by his doubt in the reed displeased Him who gave it, and the reed and the bell were taken from him.

After that, David often gave wrong judgment, till Solomon, his son, was of age to advise him.

One day, when Solomon was aged thirteen, there came two men before the king. The first said, "I sold a house and cellar to this man, and on digging in the cellar he found a treasure hidden there by my forefathers. I sold him the house and cellar, but not the treasure. Bid him restore to me what he has found."

But the other said, "Not so. He sold me the house, the cellar, and all its contents."

Then King David said, "Let the treasure be divided, and let half go to one, and half go to the other."

But Solomon stood up and said to the plaintiff, "Hast thou not a son?" He said, "I have."

Then said Solomon to the defendant, "Hast thou not a daughter?" He answered, "I have."

"Then," said Solomon, "give thy daughter to the son of this man who sold thee the house, and let the treasure go as a marriage gift to thy daughter and his son." And all applauded this judgment.

On another occasion, a husbandman came before the judgment-seat to lay complaint against a herdsman, whose sheep had broken into his field, and had pastured on his young wheat.

Then King David said, "Let some of the sheep be given to the husbandman."

But Solomon stood up, and said, "Not so; let the husbandman have the wool, and the milk of the flock, till the wheat is grown up again as it was before the sheep destroyed it."

And all wondered at his wisdom.

But the king's elders and councillors were filled with envy, because this child's opinion was preferred before theirs; and they complained to King David.

Then David said, "Call an assembly of the people, and prove Solomon before them, whether he be learned in the Law, and whether he have understanding and wit."

So the people were assembled, and the elders took council together how they might perplex him with hard questions. But or ever they asked him, he answered what they had devised, and they were greatly confounded, so that the people supposed this was a preconcerted scene arranged by the king. Then, when the elders were silenced, Solomon turned to their chief, and said, "I too will prove you with questions.

What you have asked me have been trials of my learning, but what I will ask you shall put to proof the readiness of your wits. What is all, and what is nothing? What is something, and what is naught?"

The elder was silent; he thought, but he knew not what was the answer. And all the people perplexed themselves to discover the riddle, but they could not. Then said Solomon, "God is all, and the world He made is as nothing before Him. The faithful is something, but the hypocrite is naught."

Thereupon he turned to a second, and he said: "What are most, and what are fewest? What is the sweetest, and what is the bitterest?" But when the second could find no solution to these questions, Solomon answered, "Most men are unbelievers, the fewest have true faith. The sweetest thing is the possession of a virtuous wife, good children, and a competence; the bitterest thing is to have a disreputable wife, disorderly children, and penury."

Then Solomon turned to a third elder and asked: "What is the most odious sight, and what is the most beautiful sight? What is the surest thing, and what is that which is most insecure?"

And when this elder also was unable to give an answer, Solomon interpreted his riddle once more, "The most odious sight is to see a righteous man fall away; the most beautiful sight is to see a sinner repent. The surest thing is death, the most insecure thing is life." After that Solomon said to all the people, "Ye see that the oldest and the most learned men are not always the wisest. True wisdom comes not with years, nor is derived from books, but is a gift of God the All-wise."

Solomon by his words threw the whole assembly into astonishment, and all the heads of the people cried with one voice, "Praised be the Lord, who has given to our king a son who surpasses all in wisdom, and who is worthy to ascend the throne of his father David."

And David thanked God that He had given him such a wise

son, and now he desired but one thing further of God, and that was to see him who was to be his companion in Paradise; for to every man is allotted by God one man to be his friend and comrade in the Land of Bliss.

So David prayed to God, and his prayer was heard, and a voice fell from heaven and bade him confer the kingdom upon his son Solomon, and then to go forth, and the Lord would lead him to the place where his companion dwelt.

David therefore had his son Solomon crowned king, and then he went forth out of Jerusalem, and he was in pilgrim's garb, with a staff in his hand; and he went from city to city, and from village to village, but he found not the man whom he sought. One day, after the lapse of many weeks, he drew near to a village upon the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, and alongside of him walked a poorly dressed man laden with a heavy bundle of faggots. This man was very old and reverend of aspect, and David watched him. He saw him dispose of his wood and then give half the money he had obtained by the sale of it to a poor person. After that he bought a piece of bread and retired from the town. As he went, there passed a blind woman, and the old man broke his bread in half, and gave one portion to the woman; and he continued his course till he reached the mountains from which he had brought his load in the morning.

David thought, "This man well deserves to be my companion for eternity, for he is pious, charitable, and reverend of aspect: I must ask his name."

He went after the old man, and he found him in a cave among the rocks, which was lighted by a rent above. David stood without and heard the hermit pray, and read the Tora and the Psalms, till the sun went down. Then he lighted a lamp and began his evening prayers; and when they were finished, he drew forth the piece of bread, and ate the half of it.

David, who had not ventured to interrupt the devotions of the old hermit, now entered the cave and saluted him.

The hermit asked, "Who art thou? I have seen no man here before, save only Mata, son of Johanna, the companion destined to King David in Paradise."

David told his name, and asked after this Mata. But the aged man could give him no information of his whereabouts. "But," said he, "go over these mountains, and observe well what thou lightest upon, and it may be thou wilt find Mata."

David thanked him, and continued his search. For long it was profitless. He traversed the stony dales and the barren mountains and saw no trace of human foot. At last, just as hope was abandoning him, on the summit of a rugged peak he saw a wet spot. Then he stood still in surprise. "How comes there to be a patch of soft and sloppy ground here?" he asked; "the topmost peak of a stony mountain is not the place where springs bubble up."

As he thus mused, an aged man came up the other side of the mountain. His eyes were depressed to the earth, so that he saw not David. And when he came to the wet patch, he stood still, and prayed with such fervour, that rivulets of tears flowed out of his eyes, and sank into the soil; and thus David learnt how it was that the mountain-top was wet.

Then David thought, "Surely this man, whose eyes are such copious fountains of tears, must be my companion in Paradise."

Yet he ventured not to interrupt him in his prayer, till he heard him ask, "O my God! pardon King David his sins, and save him from further trespass! for my sake be merciful to him, for Thou hast destined him to be my comrade for all eternity!"

Then David ran towards him, but the old man tottered and fell, and before the king reached him he was dead.

So David dug into the ground which had been moistened by the tears of Mata, and laid him there, and said the funeral prayer over him, and covered him with the earth, and then returned to Jerusalem.

And when he came into his harem, the Angel of Death

stood there and greeted him with the words, "God has heard thy supplications; now has thy life reached its end."

Then David said, "The Lord's will be done!" and he fell down upon the ground, and expired.

Gabriel descended to comfort Solomon, and to give him a heavenly shroud in which to wrap David. And all Israel followed the bier to Machpelah, where Solomon laid him by the side of Abraham and Joseph.[1]

It will doubtless interest the reader to have an English version of the Psalm supposed to have been composed by David after the slaying of Goliath, which is not included in the Psalter, as it is supposed to be apocryphal.

PSALM CLI. (*Pusillus eram*).

1. I was small among my brethren; and growing up in my father's house I kept my father's sheep.

2. My hands made the organ: and my fingers shaped the psaltery.

3. And who declared unto my Lord! He, the Lord, He heard all things.

4. He sent His angel, and He took me from my father's sheep: He anointed me in mercy with His unction.

5. Great and goodly are my brethren: but with them the Lord was not well pleased.

6. I went to meet the stranger: and he cursed me by all his idols.

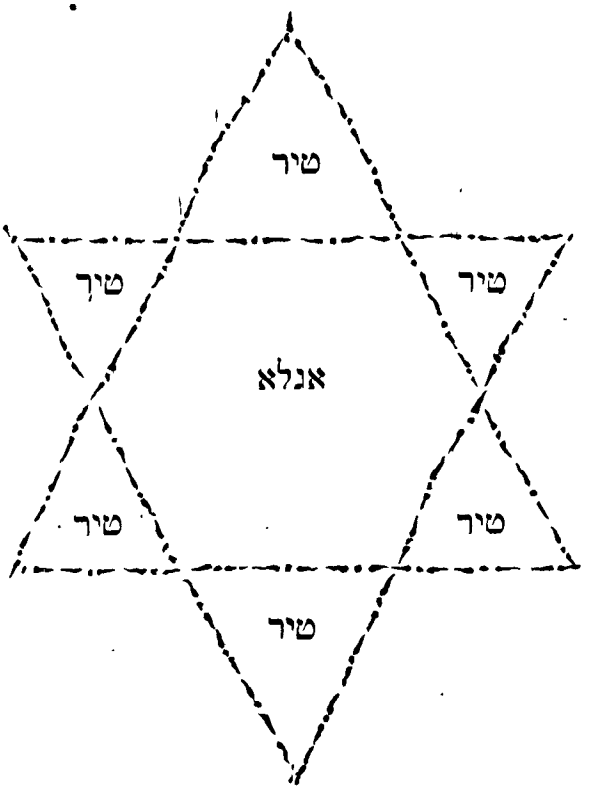
7. But I smote off his head with his own drawn sword: and I blotted out the reproach of Israel.

This simple and beautiful psalm does not exist in Hebrew, but is found, in Greek, in some psalters of the Septuagint version, headed "A Psalm of David when he had slain Goliath." S. Athanasius mentions it with praise, in his address to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms, and in the

[1] Weil, pp. 213-224.

Synopsis of Holy Scripture. It was versified in Greek in A.D. 360, by Apollinarius Alexandrinus.[1]

The subjoined shield of David is given in a Hebrew book on the properties and medicaments of things. It is said to



be a certain protection against fire. A cake of bread must be made, and on it must be impressed the seal or shield of David, having in the corner the word ט"יר, and in the middle אנ"לא

[1] Greek text, and Latin translation in Fabricius: Pseudigr. Vet. Test., t. ii. pp. 905–7.

(Thou art mighty to everlasting, O Jehovah); and it must be cast aside into the fire with the words of Psalm cvi. 30, "*Then stood up Phinees and prayed; and so the plague ceased;*" and also Exod. xii. 27, "*It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our homes.*"[1]

[1] סגולות ורהואות; Amst. 1703.

XXXVIII.

SOLOMON.[1]

1. HOW SOLOMON OBTAINED POWER.

AFTER Solomon had executed the last offices for his father, he rested in a dale betwixt Hebron and Jerusalem, and fell asleep. As he returned to himself, there stood before him eight angels, each with countless wings, diverse in kinds and colours; and the angels bowed themselves before him three times.

"Who are ye?" asked Solomon, with eyes still closed.

"We are the angels ruling over the eight winds of heaven," was their reply. "God hath sent us to give thee dominion over ourselves and over the winds subject to us. They will storm and bluster, or breathe softly, at thy pleasure. At thy command they will swoop down on earth, and bear thee over the highest mountains."

The greatest of the angels gave him a jewel inscribed with "God is Power and Greatness," and said, "When thou hast a command for us, then raise this stone towards heaven, and we shall appear before thee as thy servants."

When these angels had taken their departure, there appeared four more, of whom each was unlike the other. One was in fashion as a great whale, another as an eagle, the third as a lion, and the fourth as a serpent. And they said, "We are they who

[1] Solomon was twelve years old when he succeeded David. (Abulfeda, p. 43; Bartolocci, iv. p. 371.)

rule over all the creatures that move in the earth, and air, and water; and God hath sent us to give thee dominion over all creatures, that they may serve thee and thy friends with all good, and fight against thine enemies with all their force."

The angel who ruled over the winged fowls extended to Solomon a precious stone, with the inscription, "Let all creatures praise the Lord!" and said, "By virtue of this stone, raised above thy head, canst thou call us to thy assistance, and to fulfil thy desire."

Solomon immediately ordered the angels to bring before him a pair of every living creature that moves in the water, flies in the air, and walks or glides or creeps on the earth.

The angels vanished, and in an instant they were before Solomon once more, and there were assembled in his sight pairs of every creature, from the elephant to the smallest fly.

Solomon conversed with the angels, and was instructed by them in the habits, virtues, and names of all living creatures; he listened to the complaints of the beasts, birds, and fishes, and by his wisdom he rectified many evil customs amongst them.

He entertained himself longest with the birds, both on account of their beautiful speech, which he understood, and also because of the wise sentences which they uttered.

This is the signification of the cry of the peacock: "With what measure thou judgest others, thou shalt thyself be judged."

This is the song of the nightingale: "Contentment is the greatest happiness."

The turtle dove calls, "Better were it for some created things that they had never been created."

The peewit pipes, "He that hath no mercy, will not find mercy himself."

The bird syrdar cries, "Turn to the Lord, ye sinners!"

The swallow screams, "Do good, and ye shall receive a reward."

This is the pelican's note: "Praise the Lord in heaven and earth."

The dove chants, "The fashion of this world passeth away, but God remaineth eternal."

The kata says, "Silence is the best safeguard."

The cry of the eagle is, "However long life may be, yet its inevitable term is death."

The croak of the raven is, "The further from man, the happier I."

The cock crows before the dawn and in the day, "Remember thy Creator, O thoughtless man!"

Solomon chose the cock and the peewit to be his constant companions—the first because of its cry, and the second because it can see through the earth as through glass, and could therefore tell him where fountains of water were to be found.

After he had stroked the dove, he bade her dwell with her young in the temple he was about to build to the honour of the Most High. This pair of doves, in a few years, multiplied to such an extent, that all who sought the temple moved through the quarter of the town it occupied under the shadow of the wings of doves.

When Solomon was again alone, an angel appeared to him, whose upper half was like to earth, and whose lower half was like to water. He bowed himself before the king and said, "I am created by God to do His will on the dry land and in the watery sea. Now, God has sent me to serve thee, and thou canst rule over earth and water. At thy command the highest mountains will be made plain, and the level land will rise into steep heights. Rivers and seas will dry up, and the desert will stream with water at thy command." Then he gave to him a precious stone, with the legend engraved thereon, "Heaven and earth serve God."

Finally, an angel presented to him another stone, whereon was cut, "There is no God save God, and Mohammed is the messenger of God."

"By means of this stone," said the angel, "thou shalt have dominion over the whole world of spirits, which is far

greater than that of men and beasts, and occupies the space between earth and heaven. One portion of the spirits is faithful, and praises the One only God; the other portion is unfaithful: some adore fire, others the sun, others worship the planets, many revere winter. The good spirits surround the true believers among men, and protect them from all evil; the evil spirits seek to injure them and deceive them."

Solomon asked to see the Jinns in their natural and original shape. The angel shot like a column of flame into heaven, and shortly returned with the Satans and Jinns in great hosts: and Solomon, though he had power over them, shuddered with disgust at their loathsome appearance. He saw men's heads attached to the necks of horses, whose feet were those of an ass; the wings of an eagle attached to the hump of a dromedary; the horns of a gazelle on the head of a peacock.[1]

2. HOW SOLOMON FEASTED ALL FLESH.

When Solomon returned home, he placed the four stones, which the angels had given him, in a ring, so that he might at any moment exercise his authority over the realms of spirits and beasts, the earth, the winds, and the sea.

His first care was to subject the Jinns. He made them all appear before him, with the exception of the mighty Sachr, who kept himself in concealment on an unknown island in the ocean, and the great Eblis, the master of all evil spirits, to whom God had promised complete liberty till the day of the last Judgment.

When all the demons were assembled, Solomon pressed his seal upon their necks, to mark them as his slaves. Then he commanded all the male Jinns to collect every sort of material for the construction of the temple he was about to build. He bade also the female Jinns cook, bake, wash, weave, and carry water; and what they made he distributed amongst the poor.

[1] Weil, pp. 225–231; Eisenmenger, p. 440, &c.

The meats they cooked were placed on tables, which covered an area of four square miles; and daily thirty thousand portions of beef, as many portions of mutton, and very many birds and fishes were devoured. The Jinns and devils sat at iron tables, the poor at tables of wood, the heads of the people at silver tables, the wise and pious at tables of gold; and these latter were served by Solomon in person.

One day, when all spirits, men, beasts, and birds rose satisfied from the tables, Solomon besought God to permit him to feed to the full all created animals at once. God replied that he demanded an impossibility. "But," said he, "try, to-morrow, what thou canst do to satisfy the dwellers in the sea."

On the morrow, accordingly, Solomon bade the Jinns lade a hundred thousand camels and the same number of mules with corn, and lead them to the sea-shore. He then cried to the fishes and said: "Come, ye dwellers in the water, eat and be satisfied!"

Then came all manner of fishes to the surface of the water, and Solomon cast the corn to them, and they ate and were satisfied, and dived out of sight. But all at once a whale lifted his head above the surface, and it was like a mountain. Solomon bade the spirits pour one sack of corn after another down the throat of the monster, till all the store was exhausted, there remained not a single grain. But the whale cried, "Feed me, Solomon! feed me! never have I suffered from hunger as I have this day!"

Solomon asked the whale if there were any more in the deep like him. The fish answered: "There are of my race as many as a thousand kinds, and the smallest is so large that thou wouldst seem in its belly to be but a sand-grain in the desert."

Solomon cast himself upon the earth, and began to weep, and prayed to God to pardon him for his presumption.

"My kingdom," called to him the Most High, "is far greater than thine. Stand up, and behold one creature over which no man has yet obtained the mastery."

Then the sea began to foam and toss, as though churned by the eight winds raging against it, and out of the tumbling brine rose the Leviathan; so great that it could easily have swallowed seven thousand whales such as that which Solomon had attempted to feed; and the Leviathan cried, with a voice like the roar of thunder: "Praised be God, who by His mighty power preserves me from perishing by hunger."[1]

3. THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.[2]

When Solomon returned from the sea-shore to Jerusalem, he heard the noise of the hammers, and saws, and axes of the Jinns who were engaged in the building of the temple; and the noise was so great that the inhabitants of Jerusalem could not hear one another speak. Therefore he commanded the Jinns to cease from their work, and he asked them if there was no means whereby the metals and stones could be shaped and cut without making so much noise.

Then one of the spirits stepped forth and said: "The means is known only to the mighty Sachr, who has hitherto escaped your authority."

"Is it impossible to capture this Sachr?" asked Solomon.

"Sachr," replied the Jinn, "is stronger than all the rest of us together, and he excels us in speed as he does in strength. However, I know that once every month he goes to drink of a fountain in the land of Hidjr; by this, O king, thou mayest be able to bring him under thy sceptre."

Solomon, thereupon, commanded a Jinn to fly to Hidjr, and to empty the well of water, and to fill it up with strong wine. He bade other Jinns remain in ambush beside the well and watch the result.[3]

[1] Weil, pp. 231–4.

[2] The story of the building of the temple, with the assistance of Schamir, has been already related by me in my "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages."

[3] The Rabbinic story and the Mussulman are precisely the same, with the difference that Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, instead of the Jinns, lies in

After some weeks, when Solomon was pacing his terrace before his palace, he saw a Jinn flying, swifter than the wind, from the direction of Hidjr, and he asked, "What news of Sachr?"

"Sachr lies drunk on the edge of the fountain," said the Jinn; "and we have bound him with chains as thick as the pillars of the temple; nevertheless, he will snap them as the hair of a maiden, when he wakes from his drunken sleep."

Solomon instantly mounted the winged Jinn and bade him transport him to the well at Hidjr. In less than an hour he stood beside the intoxicated demon. He was not a moment too soon, for the fumes of the wine were passing off, and, if Sachr had opened his eyes, Solomon would have been unable to constrain him. But now he pressed his signet upon the nape of his neck: Sachr uttered a cry so that the earth rocked on its foundations.

"Fear not," said Solomon, "mighty Jinn; I will restore thee to liberty if thou wilt tell me how I may without noise cut and shape the hardest metals."

"I myself know no means," answered the demon; "but the raven can tell thee how to do this. Take the eggs out of the raven's nest and place a crystal cover upon them, and thou shalt see how the raven will break it."

Solomon followed the advice of Sachr. A raven came, and fluttered some time round the cover, and seeing that she could not reach her eggs, she vanished, and returned shortly with a stone in her beak, named Samur or Schamir; and no sooner had she touched the crystal therewith, than it clave asunder.

"Whence hast thou this stone?" asked Solomon of the raven.

"It comes from a mountain in the far west," replied the bird.

Solomon commanded a Jinn to follow the raven to the mountain, and to bring him more of these stones. Then he released Sachr as he had promised. When the chains were

ambush and captures Sachr or Aschmedai (Asmodeus). (Eisenmenger, i. 351–8.) As I have given the Jewish version in my "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," I give the Arab story here.

taken off him, he uttered a loud cry of joy, which, in Solomon's ears, bore an ominous sound as of mocking laughter.

When the Jinn returned with the stone Schamir, Solomon mounted a Jinn and was borne back to Jerusalem, where he distributed the stones amongst the Jinns, and they were able to cut the rocks for the temple without noise.[1]

Solomon also made an ark of the covenant ten ells square, and he sought to bring it into the Holy of Holies that he had made; and when he sought to bring the ark through the door of the temple, the door was ten ells wide. Now, that was the width of the ark, and ten ells will not go through ten ells. Then, when Solomon saw that the ark would not pass through the door, he was ashamed and cried, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in!" Then the gates tottered, and would have fallen on his head to punish what they supposed to be a blasphemy, for the doors thought that by "the King of Glory" he meant himself; and they cried to him in anger, "Who is the King of Glory?" and he answered, "It is the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory." And because the doors were so zealous for the honour of God, the Lord promised them that they should never fall into the hands of the enemies of Israel. Therefore, when the temple was burnt and the treasures were carried into Babylon, the gates sank into the earth and vanished. And to this the prophet Jeremiah refers (Lament. ii. 9).[2]

Solomon also built him a palace, with great riches in gold, and silver, and precious stones, like no king that was before him. Many of the halls had crystal floors and crystal roofs. He had a fountain of liquid brass.[3] He had also a carpet five hundred parasangs in length; and whenever the carpet was spread, three hundred thrones of gold and silver were placed on it, and Solomon bade the birds of the air spread their wings

[1] Weil, pp. 234–7; Talmud, Tract. Gittin. fol. 68, col. 1, 2.
[2] Jalkut Schimoni, fol. 90, col. 4.
[3] Tabari, i. p. 435.

over them for a shade.[1] He built a throne for himself of sandal wood, encrusted with gold and precious stones.

4. THE TRAVELS OF SOLOMON.

Whilst the palace was being built, Solomon made a journey to Damascus. The Jinn, on whose back he flew, carried him directly over the valley of ants, which is surrounded by such crags and precipices, that no man had hitherto seen it. The king was much astonished to see such a host of ants under him, which were as big as wolves, and which, on account of their grey eyes and grey feet, looked from a distance like a cloud. The queen of the ants, who, till this moment, had not seen a man, was filled with fear when she beheld Solomon, and she cried to her host, "Hie to your holes, fly!"

But God commanded her not to fear, and to summon all her subjects, and to anoint Solomon king of all insects. Solomon, who heard the words of God, and the answer of the queen from a distance of many miles, borne to him upon the wind, descended into the valley beside the queen. Immediately the whole valley was filled with ants, as far as the eye could see.

Solomon asked the queen, "Why didst thou fear me, being surrounded with such a countless and mighty host?"

"I fear God alone," answered the queen; "if any danger were to threaten my subjects, at a sign from me seven times as many would instantly appear."

"Wherefore then didst thou command the ants to fly to their holes when I appeared?"

"Because I feared they would look with wonder and reverence on thee, and thereby for a moment forget their Creator."

"I am greater than thou," added the queen of the ants.

"How so?" asked Solomon in surprise.

[1] Tabari, i. p. 436.

"Because thou hast a metal throne, but my throne is thy hand, on which I now repose," said the ant.

"Before I leave thee, hast thou no word to say to me?"

"I ask nothing of thee, but I give thee a piece of advice. As long as thou livest, give not occasion to be ashamed of thy name, which signifies *The Blameless*. Beware also never to give the ring from thy finger, without saying first, 'In the name of the God of all mercy.'"

Solomon exclaimed, "Lord! Thy kingdom exceeds and excels mine!" and he bade farewell to the queen of the ants.[1]

After Solomon had visited Damascus, he returned another way, so as not to disturb the ants in their pious contemplation. As he returned, he heard a cry on the wind, "O God of Abraham, release me from life!" Solomon hastened in the direction of the voice, and found a very aged man, who said he was more than three hundred years old, and that he had asked God to suffer him to live, till there arose a mighty prophet in the land.

"I am that prophet," said Solomon. Then the Angel of Death caught away the old man's soul.

Solomon exclaimed, "Thou must have been beside me, to have acted with such speed, thou Angel of Death."

But the angel answered, "Great is thy mistake. Know that I stand on the shoulders of an angel, whose head reaches ten thousand years' journey above the seventh heaven, and whose feet are five hundred years' journey beneath the earth. He it is who tells me when I am to fetch a soul. His eyes are ever fixed on the tree Sidrat Almuntaha, which bears as many leaves as there are living men in the world; when a man is born, a new leaf buds out; when a man is about to die, the leaf fades, and, at his death, falls off; and, when the leaf withers, I fly to fetch the soul, the name of which is inscribed upon the leaf."

[1] Koran, Sura xxvii.; Tabari, i. c. xcviii.; Weil, pp. 237–9.

"And what doest thou, then?"

"Gabriel accompanies me, as often as one of the believers dies; his soul is wrapped in a green silk cloth, and is breathed into a green bird, which feeds in Paradise till the end of time. But the soul of the sinner is carried by me in a tarred cloth to the gates of hell, where it wanders in misery till the last day."

Then Solomon washed the body of the dead man, buried him, and prayed for his soul, that it might be eased of the pains it would have to undergo during its purgation by the angels Ankir and Munkir.[1]

This journey had so exhausted Solomon, that on his return to Jerusalem he ordered the Jinns to weave him stout silk carpets on which he and all his servants, his throne, tables, and kitchen could be accommodated. When he wanted to go a journey, he ordered the winds to blow, and raise the carpet with all that was on it, and waft it whither he desired to travel.

One night, Abraham appeared to the king in a dream, and said to him: "God has given thee wisdom and power above every other child of man; He has given thee dominion over the earth and over the winds; He has suffered thee to build a house to His honour; thou hast power to speed on the backs of Jinns or on the wings of the winds where thou listest; now employ the gift of God, and visit the city of Jathrib (Medina), which will one day give shelter to the greatest of prophets; also the city Mecca, in which he will be born, and the temple which I and my son Ishmael—peace be with him!—rebuilt after the flood."

Next morning Solomon announced his intention to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and bade every Israelite join in the expedition. The number of pilgrims was so great, that Solomon was obliged to have a new carpet woven by the Jinns of such vast size that it could serve the whole caravan, with the camels and oxen and sheep they destined for sacrifice. When ready to start, Solomon bade the Jinns and demons fly before the carpet;

[1] The Jews also believed in a purgatory; see Bartolocci, i. 342.

his confidence in their integrity was so small, that he would not trust them out of his sight: for this reason also he drank invariably out of crystal goblets, that even when drinking he might keep his eyes upon them. The birds he ordered to fly in ranks above the carpet, to give shadow to the pilgrims with their wings.

When all was in readiness, and men, Jinns, beasts, and birds were assembled together, Solomon ordered the winds to descend and bear the carpet, with all upon it, into the air, and waft it to Medina.

When they approached this town, Solomon made a sign, and the birds depressed their wings, and the winds abated, and the carpet sank lightly to the earth. But he suffered no man to step off the carpet, as Medina was then in the hands of idolaters. He alone went to the spot where afterwards Mohammed was to erect the first mosque—it was then a cemetery—and there he offered up his noon-day prayer. Then he returned to the carpet; at a sign the birds spread their wings, the winds gathered force and lifted the carpet, and the whole caravan sailed through the air to Mecca, which was then under the power of the Djorhamides, who were worshippers of the One God, and preserved the Kaaba from desecration by idols.

Solomon, with all his company, entered the city, went in procession round the temple, performed the requisite ceremonies, and offered the sacrifices brought for the purpose from Jerusalem. Then he preached a long sermon in the Kaaba, in which he prophesied the birth of Mohammed and the future glory of Mecca.

After three days, Solomon desired to return to Jerusalem, and he remounted his throne on the carpet, and all the pilgrims resumed their places. When the birds spread their wings, and the carpet was again in motion, the king perceived one ray of sun which pierced the canopy of birds, and this proved to him that one of the birds had deserted its place.

He called to the eagle, and bade it go through the roll-call of the birds, and ascertain which was absent.

The eagle obeyed, and found that the peewit was missing. Solomon was inflamed with anger, especially as he needed the peewit during his journey over the desert, to discover for him the hidden wells and fountains.

"Soar aloft!" exclaimed Solomon to the eagle, "and seek me this runaway, that I may strip him of his feathers and send him naked forth into the sun, to become the prey of the insects."

The eagle mounted aloft, till the earth was beneath him like a revolving bowl, and he looked in all directions, and at length he spied the peewit coming from the south. The eagle would have grasped him in his talons, but the little bird implored him, by Solomon, to spare him till he had related his history to the king.

"Trust not in the protection of Solomon," said the eagle; "thy mother shall bewail thee." Then the eagle brought the culprit before the king, whose countenance was inflamed with anger, and who, with a frown, signed the runagate to be brought before his throne.[1]

The peewit trembled in every limb, and, in token of submission, let wings and tail droop to the ground. As Solomon's face still expressed great anger, the bird exclaimed, "O king and prophet of God! remember that thou also shalt stand before the judgment-throne of God!"

"How canst thou excuse thine absence without my consent?" asked the king.

"Sire, I bring thee news of a land and a queen of which thou hast not even heard the name—the land of Sheba, and the queen, Balkis."

"These names are indeed strange to me. Who told thee of them?"

"A lapwing of that country whom I met in my course, to whom I spoke of thy majesty, and the greatness of thy

[1] Targum Scheni Esther, fol. 401, tells the same of the moorcock.

dominion, and wisdom, and power. Then he was astonished, and he related to me that thy name was unknown in his native land; and he spake to me of his home and the wonders that are there, and he persuaded me to accompany him thither. And on the way he related to me the history of the Queen of Sheba, who commands an army generalled by twelve thousand officers."

Solomon bade the eagle release the peewit, and bade him relate what he had heard of Sheba and its queen.

5. THE HISTORY OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

"Sheba," said the lapwing, "is the name of the king who founded the kingdom; it is also the name of the capital. Sheba was a worshipper of the sun, Eblis having drawn him from the true God, who sends rain from heaven, and covers the earth with plenty, and who reads the thoughts of men's hearts.

"A succession of kings followed Sheba: the last of the dynasty was Scharabel, a tyrant of such dissolute habits that every husband and father feared him. He had a vizir of such singular beauty that the daughters of the Jinns took pleasure in contemplating him, and frequently transformed themselves into gazelles that they might trot alongside of him as he walked, and gaze with admiration on his exquisite beauty. One of these Jinn damsels, Umeira by name, conceived for the vizir a violent passion, and forgetting the great distance which separates the race of the Jinns from that of mortals, she appeared to him one day as he was hunting, and offered him her hand, on condition that he should fly with her into her own land, and that he should never ask her origin. The vizir, dazzled by the marvellous beauty of Umeira, gladly yielded, and she transported him to an island in the midst of the ocean, where she married him. At the end of nine months she gave birth to a daughter, whom she named Balkis. The vizir, all this while, was ignorant of the

nature of his bride, and one day forgot himself so far as to ask her to what race she belonged. No sooner had he asked the fatal question, than, with a wail of sorrow, she vanished for ever from his sight.

"The vizir now left the island, and, regaining his native country, retired with his babe to a valley far from the capital, and there lived in seclusion.

"As Balkis grew up, her beauty became more striking, and was of such a superhuman nature, that her father became uneasy lest the fame of it should reach the dissolute monster then seated on the throne of Sheba, and lest his daughter should be ravished from his arms. He therefore redoubled his precautions to guard Balkis, keeping her much at home, and only allowing her to appear veiled in public. But these precautions were vain. Scharabel was in the habit of travelling about his empire in disguise, and making himself, by this means, personally acquainted with the condition of his estates.

"On one of these expeditions he appeared, dressed in rags, as a mendicant, at the door of the ex-vizir, and obtained a glimpse of Balkis, then thirteen years old, lovely as a houri; she stepped out to give the beggar alms. At the same moment, the father hurried out towards his daughter. The eyes of the two men met; a mutual recognition ensued. The vizir fell at the feet of his king, and entreated pardon, telling him all that had happened; and Scharabel, who had fallen in love at first glance with Balkis, readily pardoned him, restored him to his place as grand vizir, and lodged him in a magnificent palace near Sheba.

"Installed there, the vizir was full of disquiet. His daughter observing this, inquired the cause, and received from her father the answer that he dreaded lest the tyrant should carry her off to his harem; and,' said the unhappy man, 'I had rather see thee dead, Balkis, than in the power of this licentious monster.'

"'Do not fear for me, my father,' replied Balkis; 'what thou dreadest shall not take place. Appear cheerful before the

king. If he wishes to marry me, then ask him to give me a splendid wedding.'

"A few days after, Scharabel sent to ask the hand of Balkis. The virgin replied that it should be his if he would solemnize the marriage with great pomp. To this the king agreed, and a magnificent banquet was prepared.

"After dinner, the vizir and all the company retired, leaving Balkis alone with the king. There were, however, four female slaves present, one singing, another harping, a third dancing, and a fourth pouring out wine for the king. Balkis took the goblet, and plied her royal bridegroom well, till he fell drunk upon the floor, and then, with a dagger, she stabbed him to the heart.

"She at once communicated with her father, and bade him send orders throughout the town that all the citizens were to bring their daughters before the king, that he might add the comely ones to his already extensive list of wives and concubines. He obeyed her, and the commotion in the town was prodigious. Parents gathered their friends, those who were officers in the army agitated amongst their soldiers, and the whole town rose up in revolt, and rushed furiously to the palace, determined on the death of the tyrant.

"Then Balkis cut off the head of the king, and showed it to the excited multitude from a window. A cry of joy rang through Sheba. The palace gates were thrown open, and Balkis was unanimously elected queen in the room of the murdered tyrant.

"From that hour she has governed Sheba with prudence, and has made the country prosperous. She sits to hear suits, and gives judgment on a throne of gold, robed in splendour. All prospers under her wise administration: but, alas! like her predecessors, she too is a worshipper of the sun."

When Solomon heard the story of the peewit, he wrote a letter and sealed it with his ring, gave it to the bird, and bade him carry it immediately to the Queen of Sheba.

The peewit flew like an arrow, and on the morrow appeared

before Balkis, and gave her the missive. The queen broke the seal and read: "Solomon, son of David, and servant of the Most High God, to Balkis, queen of Sheba, sendeth greeting. In the name of the merciful and gracious God, peace be to those who walk in His ways. Do what I bid thee: submit immediately to my sceptre."[1]

The queen, startled at the abrupt and peremptory command, read the letter to her council, and asked their advice.

They urged her to follow her own devices, and promised to agree to whatever she thought fit. She then said: "You know what disasters follow on war. The letter of Solomon is threatening; I will send him a messenger, and propitiate him with gifts. If he accepts them, he is not above other kings; if he rejects them, he is a prophet, and we must yield to his sway."

She then dressed five hundred boys as girls, and five hundred girls she equipped in boys' clothes. She collected, for presents, a thousand carpets of gold and silver tissue, a crown adorned with pearls and diamonds, and a great quantity of perfumes.

She also placed a pearl, a diamond cut through in zigzags, and a crystal goblet, in a box, and gave it to her chief ambassador.

Finally, she wrote a letter to Solomon, telling him that, if he was a prophet, he would be able to distinguish boys from girls

[1] This is the letter according to Rabbinic authors: "Greeting to thee and to thine; from me, King Solomon. It is known to thee that the holy, ever-blessed God has made me lord and king over the wild beasts and birds of heaven, and over the devils, and spirits, and ghosts of the night, and that all kings, from the rising to the down-setting of the sun, come and greet me. If thou also wilt come and salute me, then will I show thee great honour above all the kings that lie prostrate before me. But if thou wilt not come, and wilt not salute me, then will I send kings, and soldiers, and horsemen against thee. And if thou sayest in thine heart, 'Hath King Solomon kings, and soldiers, and horsemen?' then know that the wild beasts are his kings, and soldiers, and horsemen. And if thou sayest, 'What, then, are his horsemen?' know that the birds of heaven are his horsemen. His army are ghosts, and devils, and spectres of the night; and they shall torment and slay you at night in your beds, and the wild beasts will rend you in the fields, and the birds will tear the flesh off you." This letter, the Jews say, was sent to the Queen of Sheba by a moorcock. (Targum Scheni Esther, fol. 401, 440.)

in the train of the ambassadors, that he would be able to guess the contents of the box, pierce the pearl, thread the diamond, and fill the goblet with water which came neither from earth nor heaven. The chief nobles of Sheba were sent to bear the letter. Before they left, she said to them: "If Solomon receives you with arrogance, fear nothing; pride is a sure token of weakness. If he receives you graciously, be careful—he is a prophet." The peewit, who had watched all these proceedings, and listened to the message and advice, now flew to Solomon and told him all.

The great king immediately ordered his Jinns to spread his carpet seven leagues long, leading from his throne towards Sheba. He then surrounded himself with gold and gems, and gathered all his courtiers and officers together, and prepared for the audience.

When the ambassadors of Sheba set their feet on the carpet—the end of which was beyond the range of vision—they were full of astonishment. This astonishment increased, and became terror, when they passed between ranks of demons, and Jinns, and nobles, and princes, and soldiers, extending for many miles.

When the leaders of the embassy reached the foot of the throne, Solomon received them with a gracious smile. Then they presented the letter of the queen. Solomon, without opening it, told them its contents, for it had been read by the peewit. They offered the box, and he said that in it were a pearl, a diamond, and a goblet. He next ordered his servants to bring silver ewers before the train of the ambassadors, that they might wash their hands after their journey. Solomon watched intently, and he picked out the boys from the girls at once; for the boys dipped their hands only in the water, whilst the girls tucked up their sleeves to their shoulders and washed arms as well as hands.

Then the box was opened and the pearl produced. Solomon unclasped his pouch and drew forth Schamir, applied it to the

pearl, and a hole was drilled through it immediately. Next he took the diamond. The hole pierced in it wound about, and a thread inserted in one end would not pass through to the other end. Solomon took a piece of silk, called to him a worm, put one end of the thread in its mouth and inserted it in the diamond. The worm crawled down the winding passage, and appeared at the other opening with the silk. In gratitude to the little creature, Solomon gave it for its food for ever the mulberry-tree. Then he took the crystal goblet. He summoned to him a huge negro slave, bade him mount a wild horse and gallop it about the plain till it streamed with sweat. Then, with ease, the monarch filled the chalice with water that came neither from earth nor heaven.

Solomon, having accomplished these tasks, said to the ambassadors: "Take back your presents, I do not want them. Tell the queen what you have seen, and bid her submit to my rule."

When Balkis had heard the report of her servants, she saw that it was in vain for her to resist.

"Solomon," said she, "is a great prophet, and I must myself do him homage."

She accordingly hasted to prepare for her journey, and marched to King Solomon at the head of her twelve thousand generals, and all the armies they commanded. When she was a league from Solomon, the king hit upon a scheme. He called to him a demon, and bade him transport immediately from Sheba the throne of the queen and set it beside his own. The Jinn replied that he would bring it before noon, but the king could not wait, for the queen would soon be there; then Asaph, his vizir, said, "Raise thine eyes, sire, to heaven, and before thou canst lower them the throne of Balkis will be here."

Asaph knew the ineffable name of God, and therefore was able to do what he said.

Solomon looked up, and before he looked down Asaph had brought the throne.

As soon as Balkis appeared, Solomon asked her if she recognized the seat. She replied, "It is mine, if it is that which it was." A reply which, we are told, charmed Solomon.

Now the Jinns were envious of Balkis, and they sought to turn away the heart of Solomon from her; so they told him that she had hairy legs.[1]

Solomon, accordingly, was particularly curious to inspect her legs. He therefore directed the Jinns to lay down in front of the throne a pavement of crystal one hundred cubits square. Upon this pavement he ordered them to pour water, so that it might appear to be water.

In order to approach Solomon, Queen Balkis raised her petticoats, lest they should be wet in passing through what she supposed to be water of considerable depth. The first step, however, convinced her that the bottom was nearer the surface than she anticipated, and so she dropped her petticoats, but not before the great king had seen that the Jinns had maligned her, and that the only blemish to her legs was three goat's hairs; and these he was enabled to remove by a composition of arsenic and lime, which was the first depilatory preparation ever employed. This was one of the five arts introduced by Solomon into the world. The others were, the art of taking warm baths, the art of piercing pearls, the art of diving, and the art of melting copper.

The queen stepped gracefully towards the king, and bowing, offered him two wreaths of flowers, whereof one was natural, the other artificial, asking him which he preferred. The sagacious Solomon seemed perplexed; he who had written treatises on the herbs, "from the cedar to the hyssop," was nearly outwitted. A swarm of bees was fluttering outside a window. Solomon ordered the window to be opened, and the insects flew in, and settled immediately on the wreath of natural flowers, not one approaching the artificial wreath.

[1] According to another account, "that she had ass's legs" (Weil, p. 267). Tabari says, "hairy legs" (i. p. 441).

"I will have the wreath the bees have chosen," said the king, triumphantly.

Solomon took Balkis to be his wife, and she worshipped the true God. She gave him all her realm, but he returned it to her; and when she went into her own land, she bore with her the fruit of her union with Solomon, and in the course of time bore a son, who is the ancestor of the kings of Abyssinia.[1]

6. SOLOMON'S ADVENTURE WITH THE APES.

On one of his journeys, Solomon passed through a valley which was inhabited by apes which dressed themselves like men, and lived in houses, and ate their food in a way wholly superior to other apes.

Solomon descended from his carpet and marched at the head of his soldiers into the valley. The apes assembled to resist him, but one of their elders stepped into the midst of them and said, "Let us rather submit and lay down our arms, for he who comes against us is a holy prophet."

Then three apes were chosen ambassadors, and were sent to Solomon with overtures of peace.

Solomon asked them to what race they belonged.

The envoys replied, "We are of human origin, and of the race of Israel, and we are descended from those who, in spite of all warnings, have violated the Sabbath, and who have therefore, in punishment, been transformed by God into monkeys."

Solomon had compassion on the apes, and he gave them a letter on parchment, assuring to them undisturbed possession of their valley against all assault by men.

And in after days, in the time of the Calif Omar, some of his troops invaded this valley, and, with great amazement, beheld the apes stone a female which had been taken in adultery. And when they would conquer the valley, an aged ape came

[1] Weil, pp. 246–267; Tabari, i. cc. 94, 95.

before them bearing a parchment letter. This they were unable to read; so they sent it to the Calif Omar, who was also unable to decipher the writing; but a Jew at his court read it, and it was an assurance given to the apes against invasion by King Solomon.

Therefore Omar sent orders that they were to be left unmolested, and returned to them their parchment.[1]

7. SOLOMON MARRIES THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH.

The throne of Solomon had four feet. It was of red ruby, and of the ruby were made four lions. None but Solomon could sit upon the throne. When Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and sought to ascend the throne, the lions rose and struck at him, and broke his legs. He was given remedies, and his legs were reset. No one after that ventured to sit on the throne.[2]

Djarada was the daughter of King Nubara, of an island in the Indian Sea, according to the Arabs; of King Pharaoh of Egypt, say the Jews.

Solomon marched against the king, on his carpet, with as many soldiers as it would accommodate; defeated him, and slew him with his own hand. In the palace of King Nubara Solomon found the Princess Djarada, who was more beautiful than all the ladies in Solomon's harem, surpassing even the beautiful Balkis.

Solomon made her mount the carpet, and he forced her, by threats of death, to share his faith and his couch. But Djarada saw in Solomon only the murderer of her father, and she recoiled from his embrace with loathing, and spent her nights and days in tears and sighs. Solomon hoped that time would heal these wounds and reconcile her to her fate; but as, after the expiration of a year, her sorrow showed no signs

[1] Weil, pp. 267-9. [2] Tabari, i. c. xcvi. p. 448.

of abating, he asked her what he could do which might give her comfort. She replied that at home was a statue of her father, and that she desired greatly to have it in her chamber as a reminder of him whom she had lost. Solomon, moved with compassion, sent a Jinn for the statue, and it was set up in the apartment of Djarada. Djarada immediately prostrated herself before it, and offered incense and worship to the image; and this continued for forty days.

Then Asaph heard of it, and he ascended the pulpit in the temple and preached before the king and all the people. He declared how holy and pure had been the ancient prophets from Adam to David, how they had been preserved clean from all idolatry. Then he turned to Solomon, and praised his wisdom and piety during the first years of his reign; but he regretted that his latter conduct not been as full of integrity as at first.

When Solomon heard this, he called Asaph to him, and asked him wherefore he had rebuked him thus before all the people. Asaph answered, "Thou hast suffered thy passions to blind thee, so that idolatry is practised in thy palace."

Solomon hastened to the room of Djarada and found her in prayer before the image of her departed father. Then he cried out, "We are the servants of God, and to Him shall we return." Then he broke the image and punished Djarada.

After that he put on him garments which had been woven and sewn by virgins, strewed ashes on his head, and went into the wilderness to bewail his sin. God forgave him, after that he had fasted and wept for forty days.[1]

Another sin that Solomon committed was this. He was very fond of horses. One day, when the hour of prayer approached, the horses of Saul were brought before him; and when nine hundred had passed, Solomon looked up and saw that the hour of prayer was passed, and he had forgotten to give glory to God. Then said Solomon, "I have cared for the things of

[1] Weil, pp. 269–271; Tabari, pp. 450, 451.

this world instead of thinking of my Lord;" and he said, "Bring back the horses;" and when they were brought back, he cut their throats.[1]

Some commentators on the Koran object that this was an act of injustice, for Solomon had sinned, not the horses; and they explain away the passage by saying that he dedicated the horses to God, and that he did not kill them.[2]

8. HOW SOLOMON LOST AND RECOVERED HIS RING.

One day that Solomon retired to perform the necessary functions of nature, he placed his ring in the hand of Djarada; for on such occasions he was wont to remove the ring from his finger. For the first time he forget the advice of the queen of the ants, and gave no praise to God as he committed the signet to other hands.

Sachr, the mighty Jinn,[3] took advantage of this act of forgetfulness, and, assuming the form of Solomon, came to the Egyptian princess and asked her for the ring. She, nothing doubting, restored it to him; and Sachr went to the hall of audience, and ascended the throne.

When Solomon returned, he asked Djarada for the signet.

"I have already given it thee," said she; and then, contemplating him with attention, she exclaimed, "This is not the king! Solomon is in the judgment-hall; thou art an impostor, an evil spirit who has assumed his shape for evil purposes."

Then Solomon was driven, at her cry, from the palace, and every one treated him as a fool or rogue. He begged from door to door, saying, "I, Solomon, was king in Jerusalem!" but the people mocked him. For three years he was an outcast, because he had transgressed three precepts of the Law—

[1] Koran, Sura xxxviii. [2] Tabari, pp. 460, 461.

[3] In the Jewish legend, Asmodeus. In "Curiosities of Olden Times" I have pointed out the connection between the story of the disgrace of Solomon and that of Nebuchadnezzar, Jovinian, Robert of Sicily, &c.

"The king set over thee . . . shall not multiply horses to himself . . . neither shall he multiply wives to himself; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."[1] And this is what befell him in that time. He went into the land of the Ammonites, and there he fell into great want; but the master cook of the king's house took him to serve as scullion in the kitchen. After he had served for some time, he one day cooked some meats for the king; and when the king tasted the meats Solomon had baked, he was well pleased, and sent for Solomon and asked him if he would be his head cook.

Then Solomon consented, and the king of the Ammonites dismissed the master cook, and placed Solomon in his room, and Solomon excelled greatly in cooking, and pleased the king more and more with the variety and excellence of his dishes every day.

Now it fell out that Naama, daughter of the king, saw Solomon from day to day, and she conceived an ardent passion for him, and she went to her mother and said, "I shall die of love, unless I am given the head cook to husband."

The queen was astonished and ashamed, and said, "There are kings and princes and nobles in Ammon; take to you which you will." But Naama answered, "I will have none save the head cook."

Then the queen went and told the king, and he was exceeding wrath, and would have slain both Solomon and Naama; but when the first fury of his anger was cooled down, he bade one of his servants take them, both Solomon and Naama, and conduct them into the desert, and there leave them to perish.[2] The command of the king was executed, and Solomon and Naama were left in the wilderness without food. Then they

[1] Deut. xvii. 16, 17.

[2] Emek Nammelek, fol. 14; Gittin, fol. 68, col, 2; Eisenmenger, i. pp. 358-60. The Anglo-Saxon story of Havelock the Dane bears a strong resemblance to this part of the story of Solomon.

wandered on till they came to the borders of the sea, and Solomon found some fishers, and he laboured for them, and every day they gave him, in payment for his services, two fish.

Thus passed the time, till one day Solomon's wife, Naama, on cleaning one of the fishes, found in its belly a ring, and she brought it to her husband; and, behold! it was his signet which he had put in the hands of Djarada, and which had been taken from her by subtlety by the evil spirit. And this was how he recovered it: on the ring was engraved the Incommunicable Name, and this the Jinn could not endure; therefore he could not wear the signet, and he had cast it into the sea, where the fish had swallowed it.

Now when Solomon recovered his ring, he was filled with joy, and the light returned to his eyes; he went back to Jerusalem with great haste, and all the people recognized him, and bowed before him; and when the Evil Spirit saw Solomon, and that he had the signet upon his hand, he uttered a loud cry and fled. Solomon refused to see again Djarada, the author of his misfortune; but he visited Queen Balkis every month, till the day of her death.[1]

When Balkis died, he had her body conveyed to Tadmor in the desert, the city she had built; but her grave was known to none till the reign of the Calif Walid, when, in consequence of a heavy rain, the walls of Tadmor fell. Then was found an iron sarcophagus which was sixty ells long and forty ells wide, which bore this inscription:—"Here lies the pious Balkis, queen of Sheba, wife of the prophet Solomon, son of David. She was converted to the true faith in the thirteenth year of the reign of Solomon; she married him in the fourteenth, and died in the three-and-twentieth year of his reign."

The son of the Calif raised the lid of the coffin, and beheld a woman, as fresh as if she had only been lately buried.

He announced the fact to his father, and asked what should be done with the sarcophagus. Walid ordered him to leave

[1] Eisenmenger, i. pp. 358–60; Weil, pp. 271–4; Tabari, c. 96.

it where it had been found, and to pile blocks of marble over it, so that it might not again be disturbed by the hand of man.[1]

Solomon, when he was again on the throne, placed a crown on the head of Naama, and seated her beside him, and sent for the king of Ammon. And when the king came, he was filled with astonishment, and wondered how his daughter had escaped from the desert and had found favour with the greatest of monarchs. Then said Solomon, "See! I was thy head-cook, and this is thy daughter; bid her come to thee and kiss thee." Then the king of Ammon kissed his daughter, and returned, glad of heart, to his own land.[2]

9. THE DEATH OF SOLOMON.

When Solomon had recovered his throne, he reigned twenty years. His whole reign was forty years, and he lived in all fifty-five years.[3] He spent these years in prosecuting the building of the temple. Towards the end of his life he often visited the temple, and remained there one or two months plunged in prayer, without leaving it. He took his nourishment in the temple. He even remained a year thus; and when he was standing, with bowed head, in a humble attitude before God, no one ventured to approach him, man or Jinn; if a Jinn drew near, fire fell from heaven and consumed him.

In the garden of Solomon grew every day an unknown tree. Solomon asked it, "What is thy name, and what are thy virtues?" And the tree answered him, "I am called such and such, and I serve such a purpose, either by my fruits, or by my shadow, or by my fragrance."

Then Solomon transplanted it elsewhere; and if it were a tree with medicinal properties, he wrote in books the kinds of remedies for which it served. One day Solomon saw in his

[1] Weil, p. 274. [2] Eisenmenger, i. 361. [3] Tabari, p. 454.

garden a new tree, and he asked it, "What is thy name, and what purpose dost thou serve?"

The tree replied, "I serve for the destruction of the temple. Make of me a staff, whereon to lean."

Solomon said, "None can destroy the temple as long as I am alive." Then he understood that the tree warned him that he must shortly die. He pulled up the tree, and of it he made a staff, and, when he prayed, he leaned on this staff to keep himself upright.

Solomon knew that the temple was not completed, and that if he died, and the Jinns knew of it, they would leave off building; therefore he prayed, "O Lord! grant that the event of my death may be hidden from the Jinns, that they may finish this temple."

God heard his prayer, that the temple might be completed, and that the Jinns might be humbled. Solomon died in the temple, standing, leaning on his staff, with his head bowed in adoration. And his soul was taken so gently from him by the Angel of Death, that the body remained standing; and so it remained for a whole year, and those who saw him thought he was absorbed in prayer, and they ventured not to approach.

The Jinns worked night and day till the temple was finished. Now, God had ordered, the same day that the soul left Solomon, a little white ant, which devours wood, to come up out of the earth under the staff, and to gnaw the inside of the staff. She ate a little every day; and as the staff was very strong and stout, she had not finished it till the end of the year. Then, when the temple was finished, at the same time the staff was eaten up, and it crumbled under the weight of Solomon, and the body fell. Thus the Jinns knew that Solomon was dead. Now, wherever the white ant eats wood, the void is filled up with clay and water by the Jinns; and this they will continue to do till the day of the Resurrection, in gratitude to the little ant which announced to them the death of him who held them

in bondage. If the clay and the water are not inserted by the Jinns, whence can they come?

The sages assembled and enclosed an ant in a box, with a piece of wood, for a night and a day; then they compared the amount devoured in that time with the length of the staff, and thus they ascertained how long a time Solomon had been dead.[1]

[1] Koran, Sura xxxiv.; Tabari, c. 97; Weil, p. 279.

XXXIX.

ELIJAH.

WHEN the prophet Elijah appeared, idolatry was general. God sent him to Balbek (Heliopolis), to persuade the inhabitants to renounce the worship of Baal, from whom the city took its name. Some say that Baal was the name of a woman, beautiful of countenance. The Israelites also adored Baal; Elijah preached against idolatry; and Ahab at first believed in him, and rejected Baal, but after a while relapsed. Then Elijah prayed, and God sent a famine on the land for three years, and many men died. None had bread save Elijah, and when any smelt the odour of bread, they said, "Elijah hath passed this way!"

One day Elijah came to the house of an old woman who had a son named Elisha. Both complained of hunger. Elijah gave them bread. It is said, likewise, that Elisha was paralytic, and that at the prayer of Elijah he was healed.

When the famine had lasted three years, Elijah went, accompanied by Elisha, before King Ahab, and he said:—"For three years you have been without bread; let your god Baal, if he can, satisfy your hunger. If he cannot, I will pray to Jehovah, and He will deliver you out of your distress, if you will consent to worship Him."

Ahab consented. Then Elijah ordered the idol of Baal to be taken out of the city, and the worshippers of Baal invoked the god, but their prayers remained unanswered. Then Elijah prayed, and immediately rain fell, and the earth brought forth green herb and corn.

Nevertheless, shortly after, the people returned to idolatry, and Elijah was weary of his life; he consecrated Elisha to succeed him, and he prayed to God, "O Lord! save me from this untoward generation." And God heard his cry, and He carried him away and gave him life till the day when Israfiel shall sound the trump of judgment.[1]

Both Jews and Mussulmans believe that Elijah is not dead, but that he lives, and appears at intervals. The Mussulmans have confused him with El Khoudr, and relate many wonderful stories of him. He is unquestionably the origin of the Wandering Jew. His reappearances are mentioned in the Talmud, and in later Jewish legends, as, for instance, in a story told by Abraham Tendlau.[2] A poor Jew and his wife were reduced to great necessity; the man had not clothes in which to go forth and ask for work. Then his wife borrowed for him clothes, and he entered the street seeking work. He met a venerable man, who bade him use him as a slave. The Jew engaged to build a palace for a prince with the assistance of his slave for ten thousand thalers. The mysterious stranger laboured hard, and angels assisted him, so that the mansion was completed with astonishing rapidity. When the Jew had received the money, the old man announced that he was Elijah, who had come to assist him, and vanished.

After the Arabs had captured the city of Elvan, Fadhilah, at the head of three hundred horsemen, pitched his tents, late in the evening, between two mountains. Fadhilah having begun his evening prayer with a loud voice, heard the words "Allah akbar!" (God is great!) repeated distinctly, and each word of his prayer was followed in a similar manner. Fadhilah, not believing this to be an echo, was much astonished, and cried out, "O thou! whether thou art of the angel ranks, or whether thou art of some other order of spirits, it is well, the power of God be with thee; but if thou art a man, then let mine

[1] Tabari, i. c. 84.

[2] Das Buch der Sagen und Legenden jüdischer Vorzeit, p. 45; Stuttgart, 1845.

eyes light upon thee, that I may rejoice in thy presence and society."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, before an aged man with bald head stood before him, holding a staff in his hand, and much resembling a dervish in appearance. After having courteously saluted him, Fadhilah asked the old man who he was. Thereupon the stranger answered, "Bassi Hadut Issa, I am here by command of the Lord Jesus, who has left me in this world, that I may live therein until He comes a second time to earth. I wait for the Lord, who is the Fountain of Happiness, and in obedience to his command I dwell beyond the mountain."

When Fadhilah heard these words, he asked when the Lord Jesus would appear; and the old man replied that his appearing would be at the end of the world.

But this only increased Fadhilah's curiosity, so that he inquired the signs of the approach of the end of all things; whereupon Zerib bar Elia gave him an account of the general social and moral dissolution which would be the climax of this world's history.[1]

"In the second year of Hezekiah," says the Rabbinic Sether Olam Rabba (c. 17), "Elijah disappeared, and he will not appear again till the Messiah come; then he will show himself once more; and he will again disappear till Gog and Magog show themselves. And all this time he writes the events and transactions that happen in each century.... Letters from Elijah were brought to King Joram seven years after Elijah had disappeared."

A prophecy ascribed to Elijah is preserved in the Gemara:[2] "The world will last six thousand years; it will lie desert for two thousand years; the Messiah will reign two thousand years; but, because of our iniquities which have superabounded, the years of the Messiah have passed away."

[1] Herbelot, Bibl. Orient., s. v. Zerib, iii. p. 607.
[2] Gemara, Avoda Sara, c. i. fol. 65.

XL.

IṢAIAH.

THE Book of the Ascension of Isaiah has reached us only in an Ethiopic version, which was published along with a translation by Archbishop Laurence, Oxford, 1819. Gieseler translated the book, and gave learned prolegomena and notes, Göttingen, 1837; and Gfrörer has included it in his "Prophetæ Pseudepigraphi," Stuttgardt, 1840, pp. 1–55, with the Latin translation. It must have existed in Greek and Latin, for fragments of the Latin apocryphal book remain, and have been published by Cardinal Mai, in "Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio;" Romæ, 1824, t. III. ii. 238 et seq.: and it is very evident from these that they are versions of a Greek original, and not of the Ethiopic.

Whilst Isaiah was speaking to the king Hezekiah, he suddenly stopped, and his soul was borne away by an angel. He traversed the firmament, where he saw the strife of the angels and demons, waged between the earth and the moon. He entered the six heavens and admired their glory; then he penetrated into the seventh heaven, where he saw the Holy Trinity, and there the events of futurity were revealed to him. When he returned to himself, Isaiah related to Hezekiah all that he had seen and heard, except what concerned his son Manasseh.

This is the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Antichrist: "And when that time is passed, Berial, the great angel, the prince of this world, Berial will descend from his place in the form of

a man; an impious king, the murderer of his mother, a king of this world.

"And he will pluck up from amongst the twelve apostles the plant that they had planted, and it will fall into his hands.

"And all the powers of the world will do the will of the angel Berial, the impious king.

"At his word, the sun will shine in the darkness of the night, and the moon will appear at the eleventh hour.

"He will do all his pleasures; he will illtreat the Well-Beloved, and will say to him, Lo! I am God, and before me there is none other.

"And all the world will believe in him.

"And sacrifice will be offered to him, and a worship of adoration, saying, He alone is God, and there is none other.

"Then the greater number of those gathered together to receive the Well-Beloved will turn aside to Berial;

"Who by his power will work miracles in the cities and in the country;

"And everywhere shall a table be spread for him.

"His domination shall be for three years seven months and twenty-seven days."[1]

Only when Hezekiah was at the point of death, did Isaiah reveal to him what and how great would be the iniquities of his son. Then the king would have slain Manasseh: "I had rather," said he, "die without posterity, than leave behind me a son who should persecute the saints."

When the prophet saw that Hezekiah loved God more than his own son, he was glad, and he restrained the king, and said, "It is the will of God that he should live."

Manasseh reigned in the room of his father, and was a cruel tyrant. He worshipped idols, and sought to make Isaiah partake in his idolatry. And when he could not succeed, he sawed him asunder with a saw of wood.

"And whilst Isaiah was being cut asunder, Melekira stood

[1] Anabasticon, iv. 2–12.

up and accused him, and all the lying prophets were present, and they showed great joy, and they mocked him.

"And Bèlial said to Isaiah: 'Confess that all thou hast said is false, and that the ways of Manasseh are good and just.

"'Confess that the ways of Melekira, and of those that are with him, are good.'

"He spake thus to him, as the saw entered into his flesh.

"But Isaiah was in an ecstasy, and his eyes were open, and he looked upon the spectators of his passion.

"Then said Melekira to Isaiah: 'Confess what I shall say, and I will change the heart of those who persecute thee, and I will make Manasseh, and the heads of Judah, and his people, and all Jerusalem, worship thee.'

"Then Isaiah answered and said: 'Cursed art thou in all that thou sayest, and in all thy power, and in all thy disciples!

"'Thou canst do nothing against me; all thou canst do is to take from me this miserable life.'

"Then they seized the prophet, and they sawed him with a saw of wood, Isaiah, son of Amos.

"And Manasseh and Melekira, and the lying prophets, and the princes of Israel, and all the people, beheld his execution.

"Now, before that the execution was accomplished, he said to the prophets who had followed him: 'Fly to Tyre and Sidon, for the Lord hath given the cup to me alone.'

"And whilst the saw cut into his flesh, Isaiah uttered no complaint and shed no tears; but he ceased not to commune with the Holy Spirit till the saw had cloven him to the middle of his body."[1]

In the Mishna[2] it is related that the Rabbi Simeon Ben Azai found in Jerusalem (2nd cent.) a genealogy, wherein it was written that Manasseh killed Isaiah. Manasseh said to Isaiah, "Moses, thy master, said, There shall no man see God and live.[3] But thou hast said, I saw the Lord seated upon His

[1] Anabasticon, v. 1–14. [2] Tract. Jebammoth, c. 4.
[3] Exod. xxxiii. 20.

throne.[1] Moses said, What other nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them?[2] But thou hast said, Seek ye the Lord while He may be found."[3]

Isaiah thought, "If I excuse myself, I shall only increase his guilt and not save myself;" so he answered not a word, but pronounced the Incommunicable Name, and a cedar-tree opened, and he disappeared within it. Then Manasseh ordered, and they took the cedar, and sawed it in two lengthways; and when the saw reached his mouth, he died.

[1] Isai. vi. 1. [2] Deut. iv. 7. [3] Isai. lv. 6.

XLI.

JEREMIAH.

THE work entitled *De Vitis Prophetarum*, falsely attributed to S. Epiphanius, contains some apocryphal details concerning Jeremiah. It is said that he was stoned at Taphnes in Egypt, in a place where Pharaoh formerly lived. He was held in great honour by the Egyptians, because of the service he had rendered them in taming the serpents and crocodiles.

The faithful who take a little dust from the spot where he died, are able to employ it as a remedy against the bites of serpents, and to drive away crocodiles.

The prophet announced to the priests and wise men of Egypt that when a virgin, who had borne a son, should set her foot on Egyptian soil, all the idols should fall.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem, he hid the ark of the covenant in a rock, which opened for the purpose, and closed upon it. Then said he to the princes of the people and to the elders, "The Lord has gone up from Sinai, but He will come again with His sacred power. And this shall be the token of His coming,—all nations shall bow before the Wood."

Then the prophet continued, "None of the priests and prophets shall open the ark, except Moses, the elect of God; and Aaron shall alone unfold the tables it contains. At the Resurrection, the ark shall arise out of the rock first of all, and it shall be placed upon Mount Zion. Then all the saints will go there and await the Lord, and they will put the enemy to flight who seeks their destruction."

Having said these words, he traced with his finger the name of God upon the rock, and the name remained graven there, as if cut with iron.• Then a cloud descended upon the rock and hid it, and no man has seen it since. It is in the desert, amongst the mountains, where are the tombs of •Moses and Aaron. At night, a cloud of fire shines above the spot.

XLII.

EZEKIEL.

EZEKIEL, whom the Arabs call Kazquil, was the son of an aged couple, who had no children. They prayed to God, and He gave them a son.

Ezekiel was a prophet, and he exhorted the men of Jerusalem to war, but they would not go forth to battle. Then God sent a pestilence, and there died of them every day very many. So, fearing death, a million fled from the city, hoping to escape the pestilence, but the wrath of God overtook them, and they fell dead.

Then those who survived in the city went forth to bury them, but they were too numerous; therefore they built a wall round the corpses to protect them from the beasts of the field; and thus they lay exposed to the heat and cold for many years, till the flesh had rotted off their bones.

Once the prophet Ezekiel came that way, and he saw this great multitude of dead and dry bones. He prayed, and God restored them to life again, and they stood upon their feet, a great army, and entered into the city, and lived out the rest of their days. It is said that among the Jews there are, to this day, descendants of those who were resuscitated, and they may be recognized by the corpse-like odour they exhale.[1]

The Jews relate that a celebrated Rabbi found the greatest difficulty in comprehending the Book of Ezekiel; therefore his disciples prepared for him three hundred tuns of oil to feed his lamp whilst he studied at night the visions of the prophet.[2]

[1] Tabari, i. c. 83. [2] Bartolocci, i. p. 848.

XLIII.

EZRA.

CYRUS, in the year 537 before Christ, put an end to the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, as had been foretold by Daniel; and not only did he permit the Jews to return to Jerusalem, but he furnished them with the means of rebuilding their city and temple. The Oriental writers, to explain the motive of Cyrus, say that his mother was a Jewess, and that he himself was married to the Jewess Maschat, sister of Zerubbabel, a granddaughter of the king Jehoiakim.

In 523 before Christ, Cambyses, having reigned a brief time, was succeeded by Smerdis, the Magian, who is called, in the Scriptures, Artaxerxes. He, being ill-disposed towards the Jews, withdrew from them the gifts made by Cyrus, and arrested their work. Smerdis, however, reigned only two years, and was succeeded by Darius Hystaspes, who continued the work of Cyrus, by the hands of Ezra or Esdras, one of the instruments used by God to restore His people.

Ezra was the son of Seraiah, of the lineage of Aaron.

In the Koran[1] it is said that Ezra, passing through a village near Jerusalem, whose houses were ruined, exclaimed, "Can God restore these waste places, and revive the inhabitants?"

Then God made him die; and he remained dead for one hundred years. At the end of that time God revived him, and he saw the village rebuilt, and full of busy people.

[1] Sura, ii.

The commentators on the Koran say that Ezra (Ozaïr), when young, had been taken away captive by Nebuchadnezzar, but that he was delivered miraculously from prison, and returned to Jerusalem, which he found in ruins. He halted at a village near the city, named Sair-Abad. Its houses were fallen and without inhabitants, but the fig-tree and vines remained in the gardens. Ezra collected the fruit, and made himself a little cell out of the fallen stones. And he kept near him the ass on which he had ridden.

The holy man, on contemplating from his hermitage the ruins of the holy city and the temple, wept bitterly before the Lord, and said often with a tone rather of lament than doubt, "How can the walls of Jerusalem ever be set up again?"

Then God bade him die, and hid him from the eyes of men, in his cell, with all that he had about him, his fruit, his mat, and his ass. At the close of a century God revived him, and he found all as when he had died; the ass standing, and the fruit unwithered. Then Ezra saw the works that had been executed in Jerusalem, how the walls were being set up, and the breaches repaired, and he said, "God is Almighty; He can do whatsoever pleaseth Him!"

After his resurrection, he went into the holy city, and spent night and day in explaining to the people the Law, as he remembered it. But it had been forgotten by the Jews, and therefore they disregarded his instruction.

The Iman Thalebi says, that the Jews, to test the mission of Ezra, placed five pens in his hand, and with each he wrote at the same moment with like facility as if he held only one; and he wrote all the Books of the Sacred Canon, as he drew them from his memory, without the assistance of a book.

The Jews, however, said amongst themselves, "How can we be sure that what Ezra has written is the true sacred text, since there is none amongst us who can bear witness?"

Then one of them said, "I have heard say that my grandfather preserved a copy of the sacred books, and that they

were hidden by him in a hollow rock, which he marked so that it might be recognized again."

They therefore sought the place which had been marked, and there they found a volume containing the Scriptures, which having been compared with what Ezra had written, it was found that the agreement was exact. Then the people, astonished at the miracle, cried out that Ezra was a god.[1]

At the time of carrying away into Babylon, the sacred fire had been cast into a well in the temple court. Ezra, having drawn some of the dirt out of the well, placed on it the wood of the sacrifice; then the flame, which for a hundred and forty years had been extinguished, burst forth again out of the mire. When Ezra saw this wonder, he thrice drank of the dust out of the well; and thus he imbibed the prophetic spirit, and the power of recomposing from memory the lost sacred books.[2]

[1] Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, iii. p. 89.
[2] Abulfaraj, p. 57.

XLIV.

ZECHARIAH.

SOZOMEN[1] relates that the prophet Zechariah appeared to Colomeras, a farmer of the village of Chupher, in Palestine, and revealed to him his tomb; and on excavations having been made on the spot, an ancient Hebrew book was discovered, which, however, was not regarded as canonical. Nicephoras repeats the story after Sozomen.[2]

[1] Hist. Eccles. lib. ix. cap. ult. [2] Ibid., lib. xiv. c. 8.

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